

VISIONARY

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Cornea Research Foundation of America

Summer 1994

Restoring Vision Through Research

CORNEA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF AMERICA UPDATE

The Cornea Research Foundation of America now houses almost 2,000 corneal transplant case histories. It is most likely the largest data bank in the world serving this single surgical specialty.

While independent national studies indicate a corneal-transplant success rate of between 60 and 70 percent, physicians who use the surgical techniques developed from outcome analysis based on the Foundation's data bank report a success rate of between 90 and 95 percent!

Foundation records show that technical articles on corneal transplants, glaucoma and cataract surgeries treatment of eye diseases authored by Drs. Price and Whitson have been requested by physicians in the following countries:

Indonesia	Poland
Germany	Japan
Mexico	Cuba
Czechoslovakia	South Africa
The Netherlands	United Kingdom
France	Sweden
Spain	Russia
Turkey	India.

In addition to corneal transplants, Foundation research is also being directed to explore cataract surgery since numerous corneal problems can occur after cataracts are removed. New glaucoma treatment
continued on page 4

LIONS EYE BANK GRANT HIGHLIGHTS SUMMER RECEPTION



Dr. William Whitson, left, joins out-going Indiana Lions Eye Bank Jay Randle, Fred Schmidt (center), newly elected president, Ronald Blanchett, Indiana Lions Eye Bank executive vice president, and Dr. Francis Price, Jr. pose before a display at the Cornea Research Foundation of America's annual summer reception. Drs. Whitson and Price are co-directors of the Foundation.

The 1994 summer reception of the Cornea Research Foundation of America was highlighted by a research grant from the Indiana Lions Eye Bank for \$110,000. The grant will be used to fund collection and statistical analyses of pre- and post-operative corneal-transplant data.

Jay Randle, outgoing chairman of the board of the Indiana Lions Eye Bank, said the research grant is part of the Eye Bank's overall efforts to fund and support advances in vision treatment that

will help in the continuing battle to prevent blindness.

"The research the Foundation undertakes is of vital importance to Indiana's and the world's medical communities," Randle added. "We believe its efforts will prove to be instrumental in further refining transplant policies and procedures."

Dr. William Whitson, co-director of the Cornea Research Foundation, said it is important that the medical community learn

continued on page 4

Transplant Patients Reflect on Their Surgeries- Note Significant Changes in Vision, Lifestyle

Keith Corban and Susan Bove have a lot to say about corneal transplants because those graft procedures have saved their vision and given them greater enjoyment of life.

Nine years ago Corban began to notice that his vision was becoming cloudy, particularly when the air was humid. His condition was diagnosed as a cloudy cornea secondary to congenital glaucoma. Despite the daily use of prescribed eye drops for his glaucoma, Corban's sight deteriorated.

A civil engineer with MSE Corporation, Corban had to hold his work papers inches from his eyes to read the print and figures.

He had a corneal transplant in May. "When they took the bandages off," recalls Corban, "I could see clearly. My old glasses are too strong for me now. As I progress in my recovery, I can read a book a foot in front of me. It's amazing. I am thankful I had the courage to undergo the transplant." Dr. Whitson reports that Keith recently passed his driver's test with



Marion School Psychologist Susan Bove describes her life before her corneal transplant.

20/30 vision — the first time that Keith has been able to drive in five years.

Susan Bove is a school psychologist with the Marion Community School District in Grant County and is working towards her Ph. D. Eleven years ago when her son was an infant, he scratched her eye with one of his tiny fingernails. Even though she had the eye treated, infection kept reoccurring. An ophthalmologist scrapped off the scar tissue, but it reappeared.

The new scar tissue was swollen and extremely painful. "As soon as I woke up in the morning," Susan explains, "I reached for the Advil. Sunlight was

awful. The glare caused so much pain that I had to wear an eye patch when I was outside." She began considering a corneal transplant in 1991, but was philosophically opposed to the operation. "It was a big deal for me," she notes, "because you're taking something from somebody else's body and using it in your body." Finally the pain and discomfort won out over her philosophical views. She is now a believer. "Two months ago I visited friends in Texas and we went to a baseball game," recalls Susan. "I remember what a hot, sunny day it was. My eye didn't hurt at all. The glare didn't even bother me and I could see. My corneal transplant gave me back my vision, and I am grateful for it."



Keith Corban, a civil engineer, tells Foundation supporters how his vision has changed since his corneal transplant.



Something New In The Surgical Suite ... Dr. William Whitson poses in front of the new \$500,000-excimer laser recently installed in the operating suite of Corneal Consultants of Indiana. The laser will be used in phases two and three of FDA pre-approval studies on the effectiveness of the laser in correcting nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. The new laser was formally presented to members of the Indiana Lions Eye Bank and other contributors at the Cornea Research Foundation of America's annual summer reception. The Foundation is currently adding laser-surgery research information to its extensive data bank. The Price-Whitson Center for Refractive Surgery (Corneal Consultants of Indiana) is the only practice in Indiana participating in this FDA study.

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Suite 212
9002 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46260-5350
(317) 844-5610
Karen Collins, Editor

WHO'S WHO AT THE FOUNDATION

Drs. Francis Price, Jr., and William Whitson are co-directors of the Cornea Research Foundation of America. They are assisted in their research efforts by a highly competent staff composed of:

Karen Collins, R.N. - Research Coordinator

Before she joined Corneal Consultants of Indiana in 1986, Karen was a clinical charge nurse on the VIP Floor of St. Vincent Hospital. When she started at Corneal Consultants half her time was spent on the clinical side of the



Karen Collins

practice preparing patients for surgery; the other half on corneal research. She became the first full-time member of the Foundation in 1988 and established its data bank which is now the world's largest resource center for corneal transplants. Karen is a 1981 graduate of Indiana University's School of Nursing. She lives in Indianapolis and has two children.

Jill Gonzales - Systems Analyst

Jill assists Karen in writing key areas of medical research papers for Drs. Price and Whitson. She also coordinates excimer laser surgery clinical studies. Before joining the Foundation, Jill worked in clinical research for Eli Lilly and



Jill Gonzales

Company. She is a 1978 graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a degree in molecular genetics. A resident of Indianapolis, Jill has two children.

Sharon Johns - Clinical Research Assistant

A former LPN in the emergency room of St. Vincent Hospital, Sharon assists Karen Collins and Jill Gonzales in their research projects. She is currently updating the Foundation's 2,000-eye data bank with an additional 3,000 eyes. The



Sharon Johns

resources for adding this huge volume of information are being made possible through the grant provided by the Indiana Lions Eye Bank. Sharon joined the Foundation in 1988. She lives in Indianapolis and has five children and six grandchildren.

Sara Gasta - Administrative Assistant

Sara worked for Cigna as the executive secretary to the operations manager before joining the Foundation in 1993. She views the position as "quite a bit different from Cigna," and adds that work at the Foundation is



Sara Gasta

"more detailed, methodical and academic" than the administrative world she left behind. Her job entails helping with research papers, data input, managing the research library and handling the Foundation's mailings. A native of Saginaw, Mich., Sara lives in College Park and has four children and two grandchildren.

LIONS EYE BANK GRANT HIGHLIGHTS SUMMER RECEPTION

continued from page 1

why some types of corneal transplants have higher success rates than others. "The more success surgeons have with corneal transplants," he explained, "the lower

the rate of graft rejections will be that cause high-cost re-treatments."

Dr. Francis Price, Jr., added, "Reducing costly retreatments is an important goal that is well in keeping with the current drive to

contain the cost of health care. We have to learn how to improve our surgical procedures. The only way we can do that is through painstaking research efforts. The Indiana Lions Eye Bank grant will help us continue those efforts."

CORNEA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF AMERICA UPDATE

continued from page 1

ments are also being studied as technologically advanced European surgical techniques come under FDA pre-approval practices.

The Foundation is also monitoring case studies of excimer laser surgery now under clinical evaluation by the FDA. (The Price-

Whitson Center for Refractive Surgery is the only healthcare facility in Indiana participating in the FDA study.) Final FDA approval of excimer laser surgery procedures may mean an effective means of permanently correcting such common vision problems as nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism.

The work of the Foundation can

continue only through the generous giving by individuals and concerned organizations like the Indiana Lions Eye Bank. Preventing blindness is an important element in controlling the nation's spiraling healthcare costs. Your donations are needed and appreciated for the research they help generate.



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Indianapolis, Indiana 46260-5350
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