

The Visionary



Impact beyond Indiana

Issue #57

At the Cornea Research Foundation, we are proud to have a longstanding history of not only pioneering treatments, but also aiding in the spread of this knowledge through American and international fellowships. If you've visited Price Vision Group, you may have noticed the long corridor featuring photos of 47 American fellows that now practice in the U.S. Each has moved on to provide advanced surgical treatments across the country.

Not pictured along this corridor are the 14 international fellows that have traveled for 3-15 month fellowships with the Foundation. These doctors cannot practice surgery in the U.S. without licensing so they observe and work on research projects resulting in high quality publications.

This year, we have one U.S. fellow, **Dr. Jonathan Crews** and 2 International fellows **Dr. Jefferson Lautert** from Brazil and **Dr. Yogesh Bhadange** from India. We asked each to share how their experience with Price Vision and the Foundation will shape their careers going forward.

Dr. Crews stated, "beyond the technical skills for corneal transplantation and refractive surgery, I've learned that true innovation requires constant and steady work. It doesn't happen overnight or like the popular metaphor of a light bulb going off. The training and experience gained here will impact my career going forward in all aspects as it has equipped me to take on complex cases that I otherwise would not have been capable of managing. I am now well-versed in transplantation and refractive surgery."



Dr. Crews
Dr. Crews with his wife and new daughter.

On the future, he says, "I'm joining a multi-specialty practice in St. Louis in September. I hope to continue to grow my cornea practice and plan to help indigent populations when possible and travel to places in great need of eye care, especially those where cataract-related blindness is pervasive."

Dr. Lautert joined us for a year-long fellowship from Brazil. After beginning his career 5 years ago in emergency medicine, he decided to make a switch to ophthalmology. He spent two years prior to his arrival to the U.S. in a surgical residency where he learned DMEK. He said, "Dr. Price is highly regarded in Brazil and a few other doctors there have come to study under him. I consider myself to be fortunate to have this opportunity to learn the different management styles of ocular diseases. I hope to learn tips and tricks for DMEK to hone my skills going forward."

Dr. Lautert



Dr. Lautert with his wife and daughter who have enjoyed their time in the U.S.

When asked what's next, he said, "Five years ago I was in general clinic and since that time I've devoted myself to eyes. I'm looking forward to applying all that I've learned as I return to treat patients in 2018. This experience will be a tremendous asset to that goal."

Dr. Bhadange came to the U.S. from the renowned LV Prasad Eye Institute in India. On his experience, he said, "I have been able to



Dr. Yogesh

Dr. Bhadange with his parents & wife. complete a research project, learn statistical analysis, observe corneal and cataract surgery and gain a lot of experience in working with grafts at the eye bank. I look forward to passing on this knowledge to other clinical fellows as well as handling complex cases that otherwise are referred to other institutes. I also hope to establish a database similar to that of the Foundation to track transplant outcomes and publish literature in India."

We recently welcomed our 48th American fellow, Case Western School of Medicine graduate Dr. Sheila Pabon for her year-long fellowship.

- **10 year Fuchs' Genetics Study findings were recently shared in a video made possible by a gift from Frank P. and Mary Castelnovo.** The report from Dr. Marianne Price explains that three new genes were identified to be associated with Fuchs' dystrophy and the importance of a fourth gene was confirmed. A follow up study is underway. Check it out at tinyurl.com/CRFAfuchs or at Cornea.org.
- The **Cornea Classic Golf Outing** was held on May 23, 2017 raising nearly \$50,000 for cornea research. We appreciate all those who sponsored, played and volunteered to make our signature fundraiser a success! Save the date for June 5, 2018 as our chairman Harry Scheid celebrates 20 years of service!
- A study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of a new medication in subjects with dry eye associated with primary **Sjögren's Syndrome** is now underway.
- Join our community at [Facebook.com/groups/FuchsDMEK](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FuchsDMEK)
- The next **Focus on Education optometry seminar** will be on November 18, 2017 at the Ritz Charles in Carmel, Indiana providing optometrists with 7 hours of continuing education to maintain their licensing.



Dr. Price making remarks at the Golf Outing on May 23rd.

From College Interns to Next-Generation Doctors

CRFA hosts internships for undergrads with medical school aspirations. It's beneficial for students to see the work involved in research as they help maintain our long-term transplant database and work on specialty research projects. The program paves the way for the next generation of researchers in various medical fields. Over the years, many have gone on to become doctors while several others are currently in medical school.

Kelly Fairchild, DO interned, and later was a study coordinator with a focus on crosslinking for keratoconus studies prior to attending the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Des Moines University. She graduated in 2017 after completing her last rotation with Dr. Price observing surgery and working on a follow up crosslinking research project and recently began her OB/GYN residency in Milwaukee. Kelly said, *"My time in the clinic helping with procedures, explaining studies and consenting patients honed my communication skills and gave me a solid understanding of the importance of working to advance treatment options for patients. Much of my time with CRFA was spent providing crosslinking on a study basis which helped halt the disease process of keratoconus. I was excited to see the treatment was approved in 2016 and some insurances are beginning to offer coverage. It was eye opening to observe the speed of change and how important it is to stay current in order to provide the best care to patients. I felt ahead of my peers in this regard and am thankful for my time at CRFA."*



Dr. Kelly Fairchild

Lauren Rose, DO interned during her junior and senior undergrad years at Marian University in Indianapolis. In 2017, she graduated from their School of Osteopathic Medicine and started her family medicine residency with Community Hospital East in Indianapolis. She said of her experience, *"Working on studies at the Foundation was my first opportunity to interact with patients and really fueled my interest in continuing to pursue a medical career. The experience opened my eyes to the importance of listening and taking all factors of health into consideration. I learned a great deal during my internship about patient care and the importance of continuing my education beyond my degree, as science and technology are rapidly changing the way we can and will treat patients in the future."*



Dr. Lauren Rose, pictured with her husband, Devin and daughter, Naomi. They are expecting their second child later this summer.

We have hosted 7 summer interns, 3 of which are in ophthalmology residency or fellowship, 3 are in medical school and one is currently in radiology residency. Of the 6 who joined us for a year or more, 4 are in or have completed medical school, one is taking a

service year with medical school plans and our current intern, Marek Lisek, is planning to attend medical school. **"It is rewarding to inspire future physicians and help them build a strong foundation and interest in research and improving patient outcomes,"** said Marianne Price, executive director.

How We're Making an Impact with your Support

Breaking Research News by Marianne O. Price, Ph.D.



Research to prevent and treat eye diseases is important to those with genetic problems like Fuchs' dystrophy and their families. As mentioned previously, we recently shared a Fuchs' Genetics Study update. Equally important, and often overlooked, is the **importance of the spread of the knowledge gained from vision research to help people beyond those able to travel for treatment.** How do we do this? Through every available channel our goal is to provide customized communications to the public, college students with medical school aspirations, optometrists, medical fellows, as well as established doctors.



OUR MISSION:

"To give each person the opportunity for the best possible vision by innovating solutions for vision impairment and sharing results through relevant educational channels to reach a global audience. We expand possibility and enrich lives by optimizing sight."

You can help by making a tax-deductible gift to help support our research and education programs.

For optometrists, who are often the first line of vision care, we provide the **Focus on Education Optometry** Seminar held each Fall that help them to better identify, treat and know when to refer both common and complicated eye problems. We provide **Cornea Courses** to experienced surgeons to provide newer treatments in their respective states or countries and fellowships to both American and international doctors. We update patients and laypeople through our **website and newsletters, phone calls, and more** so they keep abreast of the latest options. After all, it is important to be your own advocate as you navigate the health care system.

Our mission is to comprehensively spread information gained to maximize the fruit of our efforts. We do this not only through teaching but also through publishing articles in leading industry journals to reach doctors globally.

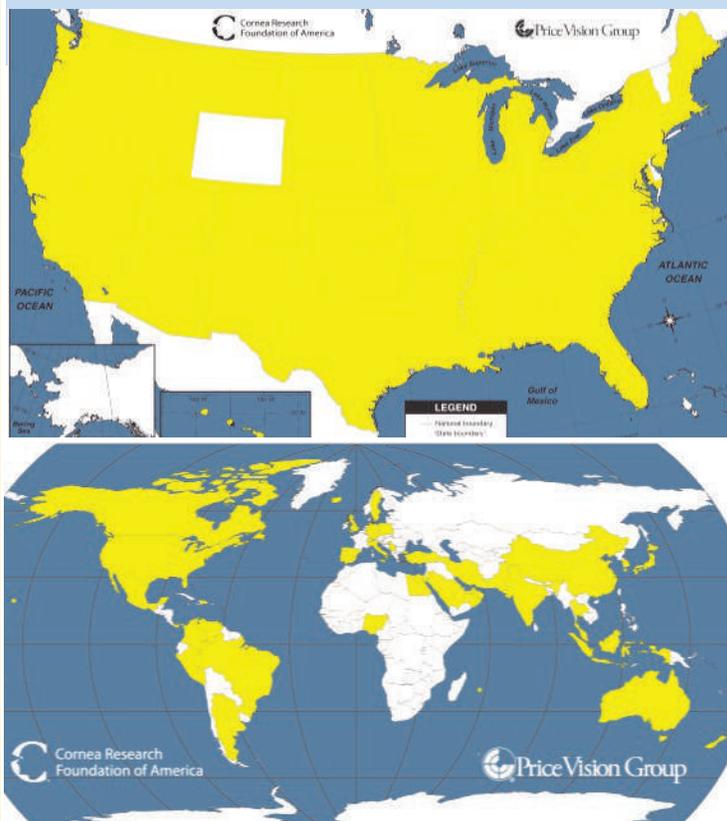
Be sure to visit Cornea.org where we recently touched base with a number of our past fellows and they have shared where they are now. You can also view our publications on the website.

What's Next in our Research Pipeline?

1. We are evaluating ways to **reliably regenerate the corneal endothelium** in patients with Fuchs' dystrophy. Once perfected, this advance could **eliminate the need for donor tissue and the risk of transplant rejection** for patients with this condition.
2. We have initiated a **large genetic study** to determine why certain people develop high eye pressure when they use corticosteroid eye drops to reduce inflammation after eye surgery or to prevent transplant rejection. We expect that the insights we gain from this study will lead to new diagnostic tests and **shed light on why people develop glaucoma.**
3. In parallel with the genetic study, we will begin evaluating a new eye drop that we hope may **prevent the eye pressure elevation** triggered by use of corticosteroid eye drops.

**We appreciate your kind support of our vision
"That All Who Look May See."®**

Global Reach—Doctors from nearly 40 countries and nearly every state in the U.S. have traveled for courses.



www.Cornea.org 317-814-2993

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Ask Your Doctor By Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

Q: “I always see many doctors in your clinic for training during my visits. How do you manage teaching so many doctors these newer surgeries like DMEK?”

A: With limited time and the amount of effort involved in training someone on complex treatments like DMEK, we are selective in who we invite for fellowship. Candidates must express strong interest, surgical ability and dedication to be considered. We offer two fellowships within our organizations.



The Cornea Research Foundation partners with the International Council of Ophthalmology and offers a fellowship in the Cornea and External Diseases subspecialty. We've hosted a number of talented doctors from around the world. My clinic, Price Vision Group, hosts a Corneal and Refractive Surgery Fellowship for U.S. doctors through the San Francisco Matching Program. We train our fellows in complicated anterior segment procedures and refractive surgery including DMEK, artificial iris implantation, intraocular lens exchange, non-penetrating glaucoma surgeries and more.

Additionally Dr. Matthew Feng and I offer Cornea Courses, most often for DMEK, which are intensive 2-day classes designed for experienced surgeons. Some immediately begin offering the newer treatments while others wait and refine their skills through additional practice before fully adopting.

The goal with our visiting doctors is to implement the skills gained and offer better techniques and outcomes to patients in their geographic area and we are humbled by our students' reach across the globe. Much like the old proverb, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime,” we believe our teachings have benefitted thousands around the world which has only been made possible by our generous supporters.

Thank you for your continued interest and support!

All donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible and support our sight-restoring research.