

Global educators honoured at world's largest annual contact lens meeting

IACLE played a prominent role in the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) Clinical Conference & Exhibition, held in Birmingham, UK from 6th to 9th June

This year's BCLA conference marked the first IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year awards to recognise and reward achievements in contact lens education worldwide.

Three IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year awards were presented, one for each of IACLE's global regions. The awards were supported by the BCLA and sponsored by CooperVision. Certificates were handed over by outgoing BCLA President Andy Yorke and Senior Vice President, Global Professional and Clinical Affairs at CooperVision, Dr Juan Carlos Aragón. This year's recipients were:

- Asia Pacific Region - Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan of Sankara Nethralaya Medical Research Foundation, Chennai, India
- Americas Region - Dr Sergio Garcia of University of La Salle, Bogotá and the University Santo Tomás, Bucaramanga, Colombia
- Europe / Africa – Middle East Region: Dr Eef van der Worp, affiliated with the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands



The IACLE Travel Award, supported by the BCLA, went to Wang Ling of the Jinling Institute of Technology, Nanjing, China.

Pictured at the awards ceremony are (left to right) Dr Juan Carlos Aragón, Wang Ling, Dr Eef van der Worp, Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan, Andy Yorke, Dr Sergio Garcia and Dr Shehzad Naroo

Dr van der Worp thanked IACLE for the award, which he said was an 'enormous honour'. 'I would actually need to honour IACLE with an award for its outstanding work – not the reverse! Networks exist for clinicians, and for researchers. But for educators – there isn't much to fall back on. IACLE has always offered me great support as an educator.'

IACLE/International Session

The BCLA programme also included the first IACLE/International Session where researchers from six countries presented their work.

Chaired by Dr Naroo, the session opened with a talk by Mirjam van Tilborg (pictured below) on dry eye prevalence in the Netherlands and how it was managed by GPs or optometrists. There are only two schools of optometry there and currently fewer than 1,000 registered optometrists. Doctors

were more likely to blame contact lenses as the cause of dry eye whereas optometrists, who had a fuller range of tests available, were better at solving the issue.

The session included the presentation of selected posters from around the world:

- Motivators and barriers for contact lens recommendation and wear, Nilesh Thite (India)
- Contact lens hygiene among Saudi wearers, Dr Ali Masmali (Saudi Arabia)
- Trends of contact lens prescribing and patterns of contact lens practice in Jordan, Dr Mera Haddad (Jordan)
- Contact lens behaviour in Greece, Dr Dimitra Makrynioti (Greece)
- How practitioners inform ametropes about the benefits of contact lenses and overcome the potential barriers: an Italian survey, Fabrizio Zeri (Italy)



It was interesting to learn about contact lens practice in different parts of the world. For example, the contact lens wearing population in Saudi Arabia is around 1:2 Male: Female. Although the sale of contact lenses is restricted to registered practitioners, there are many unregistered outlets that flout the rules.

In Jordan one of the concerns was that some practitioners might advise patients to use disposable lenses for longer than they should. In Greece some older practitioners would still recommend patients to use tap water or even saliva in an emergency, if solutions were not available! In India it was found that cost was a barrier to patients using contact lenses but also some practitioners felt that they shouldn't offer contact lenses due to cost. In Italy sensitive eyes and contact lens care and maintenance were the barriers to lens wear but the motivators were vision, comfort and aesthetics.



IACLE Director of Educational Programs Nilesh Thite (centre right) was among the presenters at the IACLE/International Session, pictured here with Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan, IACLE Global Education Manager Lakshmi Shinde and Prasad Sawant (India)

Educators honoured

Among many other highlights of the BCLA conference for IACLE:

- Vice President Professor Philip Morgan was awarded the prestigious BCLA Medal (left photo)
- President Dr Shehzad Naroo was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the BCLA in recognition of outstanding contributions to the association (right photo)



- IACLE members and FIACLEs among those receiving BCLA Fellowship were: Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan (India), Prasad Sawant, Dr Ali Masmali (Saudi Arabia), Dr Raquel Gil Cazorla (Spain), Professor Lyndon Jones (Canada), Caroline Christie (UK), and Robert Conway (UK)
- FIACLE Dr Christine Purslow (UK) joined the BCLA Council as Optometric Representative



IACLE members were also closely involved in some of the new features introduced by the BCLA's Conference Programme Coordinator, FIACLE Nick Rumney.

Keynote speaker Professor Lyndon Jones joined Professor Morgan for an 'On the sofa' discussion (pictured left) and Europe/Africa – Middle East Regional President Judith Morris was among UK educators taking part in a session on history and symptom-taking. FIACLE Professor James

Wolffsohn (UK) hosted a live surgery session where delegates were able to watch two cataract procedures transmitted live from a Birmingham clinic. IACLE staff and officers were also well represented in the poster presentations.

International events

The BCLA Clinical Conference is the largest international event dedicated to contact lenses. Delegates from 51 countries attended the 2014 event. The largest contingents from outside the UK were from the USA (57) followed by Denmark (50), Italy (34), Japan (32) and Germany (31).

Next year, IACLE will hold the **Third IACLE World Congress on Contact Lens Education** in Manchester, UK from 23th to 27th May 2015. The congress is timed to precede the British Contact Lens Association's 2015 Clinical Conference & Exhibition in Liverpool (29th May to 1st June). The theme for the congress is 'Be the best in contact lens education'.



IACLE members and FIACLEs were among those receiving their BCLA Fellowship at the conference gala dinner