

November 2014

Interaction with industry leads to successful India meeting

State-of-the-art facilities at the LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) in Hyderabad, India provided the ideal venue for a two-day IACLE India meeting last month, as Dr Nilesh Thite reports



The IACLE India meeting was attended by about 40 members from across the country. Industry presence was also prominent with representatives from Alcon, Johnson & Johnson, CooperVision and Bausch + Lomb. The participants were a perfect blend of young and experienced educators and industry representatives. This, coupled with an interactive agenda, led to open discussion, healthy debates and successful outcomes at the end of the two-day meeting.

The first day began with Dr Shrikanth Bharadwaj introducing us to the host institute, L V Prasad Eye Institute and the optometry program at Bausch + Lomb School of Optometry. This was followed by a brief update on IACLE activities and the Third IACLE World Congress on Contact Lens Education, by IACLE Director of Educational Programs Nilesh Thite and Global Education Manager Lakshmi Shinde.

A healthy discussion about update on resources followed a brief navigation of the IACLE website. There were interesting suggestions regarding images and videos to be added to the library to allow best use of available resources by a wider audience.

A group of educators who have been creating and using such visuals agreed to contribute to the resource library, as well as put together recommendations on 'various ways to perform ocular photography in a regular set-up.' Inputs from IACLE Director of Educational Development Dr Lewis Williams on the technical aspects of ocular photography during this discussion were very helpful.



The highlight of the day was the intense discussion on the challenges in contact lens education and the ways to overcome them. The audience was divided into four groups, with each getting about 15 minutes to discuss their challenges and solutions. A few of the suggestions were very practical and easy to implement.

It was heartening to see that all the educators were on the same platform and selflessly shared their ideas and resources, such as logbooks, practical sheets etc.

The industry and institute interaction proved to be equally fruitful with Industry unanimously extending their support to the institutes in the form of free trials, product, industry seminars, increased one-on-one student interactions etc. This was followed by talks from the industry throwing light on some disturbing market facts and figures, as well as discussing new technology and innovations in contact lenses. This acted as an eye-opener for the members and identified a need to look at the outcome of education in a different way.

Day two was dedicated to silicone hydrogel lenses and started with a healthy, interactive debate between the two groups on hydrogels vs silicone hydrogels. The conclusion of the debate was that both types of lenses have their own place in the contact lens segment, have their pros and cons, and appropriate patient selection is a crucial decision on behalf of the optometrist.

Dr Williams then enlightened the audience with an update on silicone hydrogel lenses including material chemistry, generations of materials etc. This was followed by an in-depth and informative talk on silicone hydrogels and lens care products. These lectures were webcast on Skype, made possible because of the state-of-art facilities at LVPEI.

After a day full of discussion of silicone hydrogels, three in house educators shared their experience on dispensing these lenses. It was great to listen to first-hand experience from Prasad Sawant, Premjit Bhakat and Prem Kumar.

The day ended with the distribution of certificates to attendees and FIACLE pins to successful candidates. All in all, it was one of the most productive and interactive meetings of the year with enthusiastic practitioners from all around the country. As Dr Williams put it, 'I'm very impressed with the group you gathered at LVPEI. The presentation of the hydrogel vs silicone hydrogel group discussions was very entertaining and enthusiastic.'