

Blue-sky thinking at Academy 2016

Against the background of the US Presidential Election, nearly 8,000 optometrists travelled to the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) meeting at the Anaheim Convention Center in California (9-12 November). IACLE held several events at this year's meeting, as Alison Ewbank reports



High temperatures and heated debate accompanied the Academy 2016 meeting which opened in California the day after the US Presidential Election result. Blue skies, 90-degree heat and a demonstration outside the Anaheim Convention Center contrasted with cooler heads among the 7,700 delegates attending.

With up to 16 parallel tracks of lectures, workshops and poster sessions over the four days of the meeting, there were plenty of topics for delegates to choose from, ranging from surgical management to the implications of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).

Key contact lens themes

The education program featured several special sessions on contact lens topics. **Myopia control** was a key theme, with a joint AAO/ARVO symposium on 'Control vs correction of early myopia: has the standard of care changed?' Papers on clinical myopia included two-year results of trials of myopia control lenses in China and other countries.

Another joint session, from AAO and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, presented an evidence-based approach to navigating the **risks and complications** of contact lens wear. Emerging challenges were certain coloured contact lenses and alternative or non-regulated supply routes.

A majority of the individual education lectures on contact lens topics covered specialty designs and, in particular, **scleral lenses**, which have seen a resurgence of interest in the US in recent times. IACLE Treasurer **Dr Etty Bitton** bucked the trend, with a presentation on daily disposable lenses, prescribing of which in the US still lags behind many other countries.

Recognizing and rewarding achievement

For IACLE, the highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the **2016 IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year** and **IACLE Travel Awards** at an International Reception sponsored by CooperVision, sponsor of the Educator awards. This year was the first time the ceremony had been hosted by the Academy, and IACLE was honoured that AAO President **Dr Brett Bence** gave an opening speech at the presentation.



Pictured (left to right) at the ceremony are **Dr Gary Orsborn**, Vice President of Global Professional & Clinical Affairs at CooperVision, with Award winners **Dr Jorge Giovanni Vargas**, **Eman Alzghoul**, **Dr Prema Chande** and **Professor James Wolffsohn**, with IACLE President **Dr Shehzad Naroo**.

In addition to the Awards presentation, IACLE also held its **Annual General Meeting** and **Executive Board Meeting** during Academy 2016. At the AGM (pictured below left) Dr Naroo delivered a report on the year's activities and Vice President **Dr Luigina Sorbara** presented the financial report.

The board discussed the program for the **2017 IACLE Congress on Contact Lens Education**, which will take place in Hyderabad, India on 9-10 September to coincide with the 2nd World Congress of Optometry (11-13 September).

Finally, congratulations to IACLE Asia Pacific Regional President **Dr Rajeswani Mahadevan** (pictured below right with Dr Bence), on achieving Fellowship of the AAO to add to her FIACLE.



- **Chicago, Illinois will be the venue for Academy 2017 from 11-14 October.**