

March 2018

Beyond the cornea: meeting demand for scleral lens expertise in India

Sankara Nethralaya's contact lens department conducted a niche workshop extending beyond the realm of conventional fitting into scleral lenses to offer patients advanced and customized options



The contact lens department at [Sankara Nethralaya](#) in Chennai, India – like many other departments in the institution – is proud to be a pioneer and trailblazer in its field. The department is credited with creating a high degree of awareness of contact lens usage and best practice, a fact that is underlined by its head **Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan** being appointed IACLE Asia Pacific Regional President.

As a facility that screens and fits contact lenses to a large number of people, the department is well aware that there are many people who cannot wear conventional contact lenses, for multiple reasons such as ocular pathology and aberrations. These patients need more advanced and customized options if they are to be suitable for contact lenses. This, coupled with the fact that scleral lenses not only serve as a vision aid but help in actively treating surgical complications, issues caused due to distorted corneal transplants and chemical burns/injuries, makes these lenses a critical device.

While awareness of contact lenses has improved with constant counselling, education and increasing usage, scleral contact lenses are still relatively unknown, not only among end-users but among contact lens practitioners. Scleral lenses are filled with liquid saline and hence are very effective in restoring vision, reducing ocular surface reaction and enhancing user comfort. There is a need for special training to fit these lenses since the process is quite different from fitting normal contact lenses. While many ophthalmic manufacturers have started producing scleral lenses the number of contact lens practitioners with expertise in fitting them is not sufficient to meet the demand.

Sankara Nethralaya's contact lens department conducted a workshop entitled 'Getting ready with sclerals' (16-17 February), with customized training on scleral contact lens fitting to impart knowledge and provide hands-on experience and troubleshooting. The workshop was conducted by Dr Mahadevan along with executive optometrists **Rinu Thomas** and **Asif Iqbal**. It touched on every aspect of scleral contact lens fitting and was enthusiastically received by the seven participants from Bausch + Lomb. The session received a high level of praise for its content and the knowledge and expertise exhibited by the trainers.