



*To prevent blindness and impaired sight
To support advances in the treatment of eye diseases*

Save Sight Society Newsletter

2020 April issue

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the New Zealand Save Sight Society,

Thank you for being a part of the New Zealand Save Sight Society. The Society was started by a group of New Zealand ophthalmologists in 1966. Since then, it plays a role in raising awareness of eye diseases and preventing blindness. More recently, the Society has emerged as one of the major funders of New Zealand ophthalmic research. In 2019, I have the privilege to take over as the chairperson of the Society. I look forward to serving the Society for the benefit of New Zealand ophthalmology. Please let me know of any suggestions by email - leos@adhb.govt.nz.

In the meantime, please stay safe and look after yourself in this turbulent time. I am hopeful that COVID-19 will be defected and life will return to normal in the near future.

Grant awarded in 2019 - 2020

Due to the generosity of our supporters, the society was able to award 2 research grants and the Heather MacKintosh Scholarship to fund New Zealand ophthalmic research. The total sum awarded was \$61577.

Here is the list of funded projects:

1. Rachael Niederer (Auckland District Health Board). Establishment of the New Zealand Endophthalmitis Registry. Amount funded \$27160.
2. Trevor Sherwin (University of Auckland). Why do women live longer than men? (The aging eye: only as old as your stem cells). Amount funded \$29417.
3. Paul Kim (supervised by Jesse Gale, Capital and Coast District Health Board). A clinical trial of latanoprost in optic nerve drusen. Amount funded \$5000 via Heather Mackintosh Scholarship.

The Society is now inviting 2021 grant applications. Further information can be found on the Society website (<https://www.savesightsociety.org.nz/>), and I have attached a flyer regarding the funding call.

The 2020 New Zealand Save Sight Society Conference

The Society Conference this year will be held in Hamilton. The Conference committee is led by Dr Mark Fajgenbaum and supported by Dr James McKelvie and Dr Thiyaga Krishnan.



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Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 situation, the conference preparation is on hold, and I will be in touch once the lockdown period is over.

Financial relationship between RANZCO New Zealand Branch, RANZCO Australia and the Society membership

The New Zealand Save Sight Society is supported by both RANZCO New Zealand Branch and RANZCO Australia. Every year, the Society receives a donation from the RANZCO New Zealand Branch office. Furthermore, for every year until 2019, the Society also received a portion of the RANZCO fellowship subscription fee from New Zealand fellows as a donation.

In 2019, RANZCO Australia had to change this policy upon advice from their auditor, and now the portion of the fellowship subscription fee that is assigned previously to the Society is itemized separately. Therefore, New Zealand RANZCO fellows would have received an invoice from RANZCO for their fellowship subscription with a separate donation to the New Zealand Save Sight Society. This does not represent any new funding for the Society from RANZCO Australia.

I appreciate the support of all the RANZCO fellows who have paid the donation as listed on the RANZCO invoice. Support from fellows is crucial for the ongoing activity of the Society. Any fellows who have paid the donation on the RANZCO invoice will automatically become members of the New Zealand Save Sight Society with its associated benefits.

A vision for the future

As a new chairperson (and a relatively new ophthalmology consultant in Auckland), there is much for me to learn, and I am grateful to be guided by the existing directors of the Society. I now have some ideas on how the Society can grow in the future after spending a year on this role. These include improving communication between the Society and eye health professionals (newsletters and website), advocacy of ophthalmic issues in New Zealand, patient education on ophthalmic diseases, and improving funding for ophthalmic research in New Zealand.

I hope to meet many of you in 2020 to discuss these further, once normality returns. Please feel free to approach me if you have any suggestions or ideas on how to grow the Society.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leo Shek".

**Leo Shek MBChB, MD (Auckland), MBA (Cambridge), FANZCO
Consultant Ophthalmologist and Chairperson of the New Zealand Save Sight Society**