

COUNCIL LECTURE, SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2018

Synopsis:

Today, clinicians have access to technology and knowledge that allows them to help many. However, patients of all ages are still losing sight from corneal blindness and suffering with discomfort and blurred vision from corneal disease. Research work done yesterday has provided some of the solutions. Learnings from every day practise can also save sight, and changes in policy and education can have a multiplier effect.

The Save Sight Keratoconus Registry (SSKR), part of the Fight Corneal Blindness Project!, holds data on over 15,000 visits from 1,700 patients and each month grows by 10%. Today, the SSKR has reported on the patient experience of and treatment trends in keratoconus, as well as providing bench- mark CPD approved reports for corneal cross-link- ing. Real world data is captured as clinicians' in everyday practise can use the registries. Following a 'world ?rst' stem cell treatment that restored the cor- neal surface and improved sight, using a unique model, new knowledge of stem cell biology has allowed us to optimise this treatment. A RANZCO position statement on Ocular Stem Cells has informed the public on the current state of stem cell treatments. The public were also alerted to Vitamin A de?ciency in Australian children and adults. For corneal infections a surveillance programme, Ortho- keratology advice, and an international collabora- tion have been developed. An international study is looking towards prevention for ocular trauma. For tomorrow, supporting research along with train- ing the next generation of eye experts – clinicians and scientists, will allow continued provision of the best care to our patients.

Brief Curriculum Vitae:

Professor Stephanie Watson is corneal and cataract surgeon with appointments at the Save Sight Insti- tute, University of Sydney and Sydney Eye, Prince of Wales, and Sydney Children's Hospitals. She is in practice in Bondi Junction, Sydney. Prof Watson leads a research program focused on innovative solutions to restore sight and promote eye health; and trains the next generation of eye care workers and researchers.

Prof Watson is recognised internationally for her ground-breaking corneal therapies; including a world-?rst stem cell transplantation technique. She has over 152 publications; has given over 175 pre- sentations and been appointed as a Visiting Profes- sor nationally and internationally. Her career has been supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

As Chair of the Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia; Stem Cells Australia Regenerative Medi- cine Programme representative; and Editor, Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group UK she contrib- utes to policy development. Prof Watson was selected by the University of Sydney and completed the Chief Executive Women leaders programme and has completed the ARVO Leadership develop- ment programme for Women. She is a member of the ARVO, Advocacy and Outreach Committee. ARVO is the largest and most respected eye and vision research organisation in the world. Awards received include ?rst prize on the Medical Device Commercialisation Training Program, NSW Women of the Year and Pride of Australia nominations, UNSW Early stage innovation award ?nalist, Gus- tav Nossal NHMRC scholarship – awarded to

the highest ranked applicant, and the 'Les is more' grand ?nal and people's choice award on The New Inventors.