

Phacoemulsification training for small manual incision cataract surgery experienced Nepalese surgeons: A joint project of Queensland ophthalmologists and Lumbini Eye Institute

Many surgeons in developing countries are embracing Phacoemulsification surgery for its excellent results. Given the significant number of cataract patients, the number of Phaco surgeons in Nepal, like in many developing countries is limited. Most Nepalese Ophthalmology residency programs do not have focussed syllabus on Phacoemulsification. Few institute deliver ad hoc trainings. A joint collaboration of Queensland Ophthalmologists, Australia and Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (NNJS) was initiated to develop Phacoemulsification training for qualified Nepalese Ophthalmic surgeons at Lumbini Eye Institute (LEI) from 2017 to 2020. The purpose of the project is to upgrade the phacoemulsification surgical skill of Nepalese Ophthalmologists.

A team of Consultant Ophthalmologists from Queensland visit Lumbini Eye Institute twice a year for on-site intensive supervision on voluntary basis. Trainee surgeons are identified by Medical Committee of LEI. Before conducting actual supervised surgical training in hospital settings, the basic knowledge of the trainees is established with web-based portal, followed by multiple-choice question tests. The outcome of training at the end of each training day for each trainee is evaluated with Ophthalmology Surgical Competency Assessment Rubric of the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO-OSCAR) which assesses each step in Phacoemulsification surgery, intra-operative complications, complexity of cases and takeovers by the supervising Consultants. The candidates are issued course completion certificates after they submit the audit of the cases.

Two weeks of intensive surgical supervision with about 50-60 Phacoemulsification surgeries on an average per candidate have been carried out in the last 2 training visits.