



# InSight

A Newsletter from the UBC Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences



## CLINIC OUTREACH

This month we would like to highlight those in the department who offer ophthalmology clinical services around the province. Here are some of our department members who have done and continue to do this great work which supports patients and families living in some of the remote parts of British Columbia (and Yukon):

- Dr. Lica Chui and Dr. Farzin Forooghian visit Fort St. John monthly in addition to Cranbrook.
- Dr. Ashely Ko also visits Fort St. John once per year for 3 days - 1 day in clinic and 2 days in OR.
- Dr. Conor Mulholland has also visited Fort St. John this year.
- Dr. Chris Lyons has visited Nelson and Bella Coola for many years, including 2 trips this year.
- Dr. Simon Warner and Dr. Salina Teja attend the DTES Eye Clinic once a month.
- Dr. Kevin Wade visits 100 Mile House.
- Dr. David Fine and Dr. Simon Holland have a part-time practice in Dawson Creek.
- Drs. Kevin Ramsey and Malvinder Hoonjan travel from Kelowna to Nelson to provide retina clinics to the West Kootenays.
- Dr. Michael Ross goes from Kamloops to do clinics in Williams Lake.
- Dr. Patrick Ma visits Northwest BC including Terrace and he also visits Whitehorse.
- Dr. Janette Lindley also goes to Whitehorse.
- Dr. Jane Gardiner visits Whitehorse for 2 weeks of pediatric ophthalmology outreach per year. She also visits Prince George 3 times a year (pre-covid) and the DTES Eye Clinic once a month.
- Dr. Patrick Ma visits Nanaimo 2-4 times a month.
- Dr. Katherine Paton has done a Squamish clinic twice a month, for the last 23 years, with COVID interruption. She offers full comprehensive ophthalmology and serves the Sea to Sky corridor, Britannia Beach to Mount Currie, Pemberton, and Lilloet.

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# RESEARCH

## LAB UPDATES

### Dr. Orson Moritz's Lab:

Congratulations to Dr. Brittany Carr, postdoctoral fellow on obtaining a fellowship from the Brightfocus Foundation.

### Dr. Kevin Gregory-Evans Retinal Therapeutics Lab:

Gene therapy research. Our work in gene therapy has been extended through a new agreement for funding from **ProQR Therapeutics NV**. This is in addition to three other ongoing trials funded by **Biogen** and a recently completed trial funded by **PTC Therapeutics**. These trials are supported by an ongoing grant from **Fighting Blindness Canada** to establish and run a Registry of inherited eye disease for patients in British Columbia. These clinical trials run in parallel with lab-based pre-clinical work in retinal stem cell transplantation funded by **ProtoKinetix Inc.**

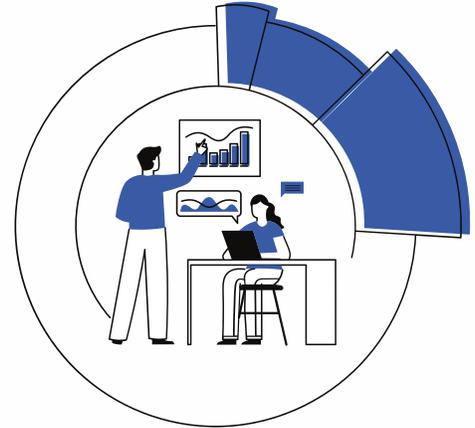
### Dr. Joanne Matsubara's Lab:

Welcome to Darian Cheng (Co-op Undergrad), Catherine Xu (Undergrad), Tushar Dave (Med Class 2025), Yoojin Choi (Med Class 2025) and Siqi Li (Research Assistant).

## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

### Dr. Joanne Matsubara:

"Targeting Pyroptotic Cell Death Pathways in Retinal Disease." Mary Zhao, Siqi Li and Joanne Matsubara. *Frontiers in Medicine*. Section Ophthalmology (in press).



## GAINED IN TRANSLATION

The 2021 Gained in Translation conference was held on October 30th, 2021, to an audience of nearly 100 participants! The agenda included an enticing mixture of speakers from the University of Washington, University of British Columbia & Oregon Health Science University.

The conference highlighted diverse topics ranging from corneal transplantation, trabecular meshwork cell motility and neuro-protection. Dr. Iovenio presented an engaging talk on *New Developments on Keratoprosthesis and Stromal Substitutes*. Dr. Vaezi presented clinical pearls of uveitis pathophysiology and management. Dr. Gill moderated a lively discussion on glaucoma & *in vitro* live imaging of trabecular meshwork cells. This year's Helen Keller Award was given to Dr. Deborah Giaschi - a very well-deserved honor! A sincere congratulations to all.

We are already looking forward to next year's conference!

Kaivon Vaezi  
Claire Sheldon



# PHILANTHROPY CORNER

Did you know that the University of British Columbia is a registered charity in Canada? The Development Team is part of UBC Faculty of Medicine Dean's Office and we support the faculty by working with our donor community to nurture the next generation of health professionals and to support research in areas from cells to policy.

To learn more or if you have any questions, contact the Department of Ophthalmology representative Sabrina Ting at [sabrina.ting@ubc.ca](mailto:sabrina.ting@ubc.ca).

## UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to teach the undergraduate students of UBC. The top five teachers with the most hours since September 2021 are:

- Ari Giligson
- Jane Gardiner
- Conor Mulholland
- Hugo Sutton
- Andrew Kirker

It has been a busy time for undergraduate teaching!!

As of the fall, we are back to our usual full week of ophthalmology for the 3rd year clerkship students. In addition, with the continued restriction on out of province electives, we have had several 4th year students enjoying opportunities in our offices. Finally, there is the double cohort of Year 1 and 2 students grateful for their small group, clinical skills teaching. Thank you to everyone who has assisted with any of this teaching.

If anyone is interested in offering an elective experience for the class of 2023, year 4 students, please let Jane Gardiner know. Consider working with a colleague or two and offer a 2 week elective. It is still uncertain if out of province electives will be allowed.

In the new year, there will be more chances to teach the year 1 and 2 students. Please reach out to Nick Geers at [clinical.skills@ubc.ca](mailto:clinical.skills@ubc.ca) if you are interested. Perhaps your fellows would like the experience. They will be compensated for their efforts. There is great need with 48 groups needing preceptors!! The dates are:

Tuesday mornings January 11, 18, March 1, 8, 15

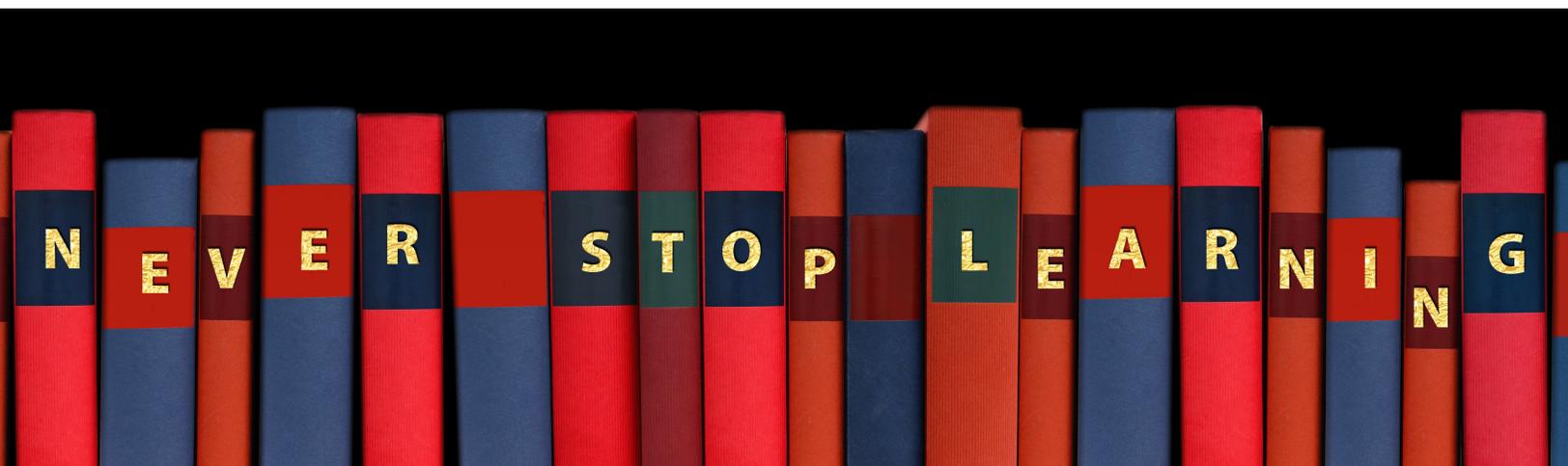
Tuesday afternoons January 25, March 1, 15, 22

Thursday morning January 13, February 10, March 10, 17

Thursday afternoon January 27, March 3, 17, 24

If anyone would like CME credits for writing exam questions, please contact [jagkm@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:jagkm@mail.ubc.ca)

A sincere thank you to everyone for their ongoing commitment to undergraduate teaching.



# RESIDENCY PROGRAM

## Introductions:

New this year! Our PGY1s will be working at the Eye Care Centre, St. Paul's Hospital and BCCH as they enjoy an 8-week Ambulatory Emergency Ophthalmology Rotation. Our program is working to support earlier ophthalmology exposure while also balancing a fulsome PGY1 rotating year. As we transition to Competency by Design (CBD) in 2023, this rotation will be important to train residents as they progress through the Transition to Specialty stage. Join us as we introduce and welcome Dr. Mahadev Bhalla, Dr. Jennifer Ling & Dr. Lauren Hughes. Dr. Mahadev Bhalla was born in India and migrated to Canada at the age of 10. He enjoys hiking, skiing racquet sports – he also has been teaching Bollywood dance and bhangra for 10 years! Dr. Jennifer Ling likes Samoyed dogs (I had to google this!) and enjoys biking and travelling. Dr. Lauren Hughes enjoys being active, teaching spin classes when she can. Her other talents include opera - she used to tour with an operatic ensemble in Europe and New York.



Our program would like to welcome Karen DuPlessis! She is the program's new Education Coordinator. Karen has substantial experience working within a university setting, and, as well, as the UBC PGME organization. We are excited to have Karen join us! We have set up a new, dedicated email: [oph.education@ubc.ca](mailto:oph.education@ubc.ca).



## Accreditation Update:

A sincere thanks to each of you who took time to attend the meetings with Dr. Bernard Hurley during his external consultation earlier this month. We await his formal report and, once available, findings will be communicated to stakeholders, via discussion at staff meetings and email send outs. Our next step on the road to full accreditation is an upcoming UBC Internal Review, scheduled for June 3, 2022. Mark your calendars!

## CARMS:

Like last year, the 2022 CARMS process is condensed in its timeline and all interviews will be virtual. Our interviews are scheduled to take place March 10th, 2022 and, as we did last year, stay tuned for additional virtual social events. As Dr. Ahuja discussed at last week's Grand Rounds, we will be working to enhance EDI initiatives within the resident selection process. Individuals with knowledge, interest and a willingness to assist, please let us know.

## Learning Environment:

Our program will also be working with Dr. Lyons to enhance our department's process around handling reports of intimidation & harassment. UBC is committed to providing all students, residents and faculty with a safe and respectful learning environment, and reports of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying will not be tolerated. To create a department-specific guide, we are accessing many UBC resources (e.g. UBC Faculty of Medicine, PGME office & the UBC REDI office). Our goal is to create ongoing, transparent discussion around these critical challenges, how they are handled and highlight how learners and faculty can continue to be engaged.

With much anticipation, please look at our job posting for Respectful Workplace Lead (<https://ophthalmology.med.ubc.ca/about/careers/>). Consider getting involved and help make a positive impact!

## And now for something completely different:

To incorporate CanMEDS roles more formally, our Competence Committee has started asking residents to submit a self-reflection on these roles. Have a look at what one resident wrote as they reflected on Health Advocacy – one resident supported a very ill patient, through the patient's concerns, numerous staff evaluations and medical consultations. Story on next page.

As the winter holiday season descends upon us, we would like to extend our best wishes to each of you and your families, for this season and for all of 2022!

Sincerely,  
Claire  
Gelareh  
Nawaaz

# A BIT OF SELF REFLECTION

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## Advocacy

5:10pm

I already had two pages on my pager and I started my shift 10 minutes ago.

I wasn't surprised.

I've had strange things happen to me on call. Strange situations. Strange diagnoses.

I answered the page by calling the number back.

I had a sense of relief when it was a straightforward diagnosis: rule out herpes zoster ophthalmicus. Nothing strange so far.

5:45pm

I greeted my patient at the door. He was a young man, 31 years old, accompanied by his mother.

He looked at me with a sense of immense dread.

I had a feeling things were becoming more strange.

5:50pm

He sat across me in the exam room.

"I'm really sick doc," he told me.

I explained shingles is very painful and I agreed.

"No, I'm really sick doc. I think I have flesh eating disease."

I reassured he did not.

"No, I've had fevers and chills, and I feel really sick".

Strange, but I did not have the time to entertain him for now.

I reassured him that we would look at his eye and see what would happen.

6:20pm

"The front of your eye looks good," I explained. No sign of zoster in the eye.

"Let me look at the back of your eye just to finish the exam."

Blood.

Hemorrhages.

This was weird I thought. Why are there hemorrhages in the retina?

I made a few phone calls.

Someone told me it was likely undiagnosed diabetes.

Someone else said I was wrong.

I went back to the patient.

I told him to come back tomorrow. We would need to take a closer look.

*continued...*



*continued...*

The following day.

9:00am

"I see hemorrhages," I told my attending.

"I don't believe you, that doesn't seem like zoster."

"I know, that's why I'm lost."

"Let's take a look."

"I see."

My attending sat there pondering. The patient may not know this, but that minute of silence was life-changing for everyone in the room. For the patient. For me.

"He needs to see internal medicine," my attending told me. "I worry he has something systemic happening causing the shingles to occur."

Fevers and chills.

I contacted internal medicine. The resident was hesitant to see the patient. I pleaded my case.

"This isn't shingles. There might be something systemic."

"Like what?"

"We're not sure, that's why we were hoping you can help us."

"Well...let me talk to my attending. I don't think he needs to be seen."

They called back.

We'll see them in 3 days they said.

3 days later

1:00pm

"Is this the ophthalmology resident who sent this patient? This is internal medicine resident."

"Yes."

"He has shingles. Why did you send a patient with shingles to internal medicine? I don't think we need to see him."

"It's not the shingles. He has hemorrhages in the back of his eyes. We are worried about something systemic."

"Oh. Well, we did the bloodwork, and it looks like he has just some elevated protein. Everything else looks fine. We'll do a further workup just in case. But he probably just has shingles, which explains his symptoms."

"Thank you."

The following day:

11:00am

A text message.

"Is this the ophthalmology resident who sent the shingles patient? This is the internal medicine attending."

"Yes."

"You were right. He has Waldenstrom's macroglobulinemia. We asked him to come to the Emergency Room straight away for admission and treatment."

"Thank you for seeing him and updating us. I will inform my staff."

"Nice pick up."

Strange.



Upcoming Departmental Events:

- December 14, 2021: Next UBC Faculty Meeting
- December 17, 2021: Next RTC Meeting
- January 7, 2022: Subsequent RTC Meeting

Upcoming Resident Program Events:

- March 10, 2022: UBC CARMS Interviews
- March 24 & 25, 2022: Royal College Written Examinations
- May 27, 2022: Royal College Oral Examinations (virtual)



Eye Care Centre will be closed December 24, 2021- January 3, 2022 inclusive. Will re-open January 4, 2022.