

FOCUS ON CATARACT SURGERY IN VITRECTOMIZED EYES

Dr Arup Chakrabarti is the director of Chakrabarti Eye Care Centre, a tertiary referral centre in Trivandrum, Kerala. His practice focuses on challenging cataract cases, premium IOLs and glaucoma, and his keynote lecture for the upcoming 33rd Malaysia-Singapore Joint Ophthalmic Congress (MSJOC 2018) is titled "Cataract Surgery in Vitrectomized Eyes".

"This theme is one that is close to my heart. I started performing cataract surgery in vitrectomized eyes soon after my fellowship in the early 1990's. Since my wife happens to be a retina surgeon, we started to take on these challenging cases." says Dr Chakrabarti.

"As of now we have collaborated for almost 25 years, co-managing these cases. I decided to choose this theme because my long experience with these tough situations have taught me how to deliver optimal outcomes."

His keynote lecture will be video-based and will illustrate the complex issues faced by the surgeon while dealing with cataracts in vitrectomized eyes. The scenarios demonstrated include Conjunctival scarring, inherently soft eyes, anterior chamber depth fluctuation, intraoperative miosis, hard nuclei as a result of accelerated nuclear sclerosis, posterior capsular plaques, zonular laxity, pre-existing capsular tears etc. There will also be a discussion on Biometry and IOL selection in silicone oil-filled eyes.

"I hope to share my views on proper surgical protocol and adherence to these guidelines to get good results on a consistent basis so that surgeons planning to take up these challenging cases benefit from the lecture."

For Dr Chakrabarti, "the most daunting issue today in terms of patient care is extremely high and oftentimes unreasonable patient-expectation - perhaps a Frankenstein we ourselves have created. This comes at a time with the threat of price-capping for the entire healthcare industry - including ophthalmology, a subspecialty which is increasingly technology-dependent - looms large. In the event of such a scenario becoming a reality, it is a matter of grave concern as to how to maintain the high quality of services".

Dr Chakrabarti completed his undergraduate degree and residency in ophthalmology at Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) in Pondicherry, India. He then completed his fellowship at Aravind Eye Care System, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India in 1992 and continued as faculty and Associate Professor in Ophthalmology till he started his private practice in Trivandrum, Kerala, India, in 1999. While at Aravind, he was in charge of training in various cataract surgery programs.

"Having spent close to a decade at the Aravind Eye Care System during my formative years as an eye surgeon very few things motivate me more than what Aravind does. I always look to the lessons

learnt from the famous institute regarding work ethics, punctuality, discipline empathy, commitment to the social cause, education, human resource management, and service before self.”

At Aravind, he was fortunate to witness the legendary Dr G Venkataswamy (Dr “V”) from close quarters. “He has been a great inspiration at various stages in my career and still continues to guide me through his teachings. Dr P Namperumalsamy and Dr G Natchiar (who has been my mentor) still continue to power my drive to aim for excellence and the belief that “Nothing is Impossible”.

“I am also inspired by the new generation of ophthalmologists who are absolutely focused on their topic of interest. They know what they want. Most of the smartphone apps and photography concepts have originated from their enterprise and they seem to have brought in a new dimension to traditional ophthalmology. I am also inspired by the power of the web and web-based educational resources.”

Dr Chakrabarti is passionate about contributing to ophthalmic education, by lecturing all over the country and has performed several live surgery demonstrations. He regularly conducts Instruction Courses at national and international levels, associating himself with the AAO, ASCRS, ESCRS, APAO and AIOS and has participated in more than 200 international instructional courses as a faculty or lead instructor. He is a member of the highly prestigious IIC (International Intraocular Implant Club).

Herecently edited 2 books entitled “Cataract Surgery in Diseased Eyes” and “Posterior Capsular Rent – Genesis to Management” and is currently working on another book titled “Posterior Segment Complications of Cataract Surgery” soon to be published by Springer. He is a reviewer for the JCRS and IJO. He is also engaged in a few ongoing projects that include the role of advanced phaco-dynamics in optimising outcomes in several challenging situations like Posterior Polar Cataracts, Ultra-hard cataracts, a comparative evaluation of various small pupil devices, and more.

“Joyous feelings envelop me when ophthalmology students / residents / practitioners benefit from the books I have edited. It is also a good day when a fellow eye surgeon writes in appreciation of my YouTube videos and how it has benefited them in their surgical endeavours. A thank you note and gratitude from a complex cataract patient is always a source of joy as is when a routine patient comes in with a big smile on his face on day 1, or when a patient asks to see the nurses who assisted in their care after the physician consultation is over. Simple things bring so much joy.”

For Dr Chakrabarti, there is no typical day. An OR day – thrice a week – usually starts at 8.30 AM. “The OR time is as enjoyable as it is stressful since it contains a wide mix of cases the spectrum ranging from simple cataracts to cataracta nigra through posterior polar cataracts and subluxated cataracts so on and so forth.” His typical clinic day starts at the same time as the OR where in addition to clinical responsibilities a lot of administrative work gets interspersed.

“I devote a lot of time to the education of my younger colleagues and this passion includes producing instructional video clips. My hobbies of the younger days have now given way to time spent in trying to keep up with the pace with which ophthalmology is growing. A lot of effort goes behind editing instructional videos.”

In his spare time, Dr Chakrabarti participates in community outreach programs reaching out to the underprivileged and the needy for whom restoration of vision is a great step in getting a firm foothold in life. “I look forward to a future where cutting edge ophthalmic care becomes accessible to all patients regardless of their economic status and geographic location,” he says.



by Dr Arup
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