

# The NEOS Spring Meeting

The Spring North of England Ophthalmological Society (NEOS) meeting took place in the elegant setting of Redforth Hall under the watchful eye of Horus. This ancient Egyptian symbol of protection and health is set between the roses of York and Lancaster on the NEOS presidential amulet.

The chosen themes were cornea and cataract and all sessions were chaired deftly and amiably by Miss Christine Ellerton (Middlesbrough).

### Look beyond what you see

Ms Seema Anand (Middlesbrough) began with an update on corneal complications in rheumatoid arthritis. Ms Anand also gave useful treatment guidelines drawing on her invaluable experience of managing such complex patients with multiple co-morbidities.

Mr Andrew Gibson (Middlesbrough) reminded us that 'there is nothing better for the front of the eye than the back of the eyelid'. His video collection demonstrated a series of oculoplastic techniques, which can be used to improve outcomes in ocular surface disease.

Alison Weston (Leeds) provided a great tutorial on contact lenses as part of treatment algorithms for corneal ectasias. She also highlighted how local landmarks, for example Roseberry Topping, can remind one (so inclined) of keratoconus. Have another look when you next drive past Pen-y-ghent.

### Bright young things

The free paper session stimulated plenty of debate on diverse topics ranging from paediatric chalazion pathways to dry eye prescriptions. The hour was admirably dominated by medical students who all presented their research with great confidence and ease. The trainees and students had plenty of enthusiasm and drive which all bodes very well for the future. The annual free paper prizes were

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awarded to Ronak Patel for a paper entitled 'Dry eye prescribing trends in England 2000 – 2012' and to Yunzi Chen for a paper entitled 'Detection of autophagy in choroidal melanoma and correlation with chromosome 3 copy number'.

### What, why and where next in HSK

Professor Stephen Kaye (Liverpool) provided the NEOS audience with a superb guest lecture on herpes simplex keratitis (HSK). His elegant summary of key principles in pathogenesis and treatment was derived from his own extensive research and results from other notable researchers worldwide. The highs and lows of corneal graft surgery were ever apparent when he related a challenging case history from his last operating list. 'Always book two grafts on your list' was the moral of this tale and a memorable mantra for all corneal surgeons.

### Toxic soup and a slice of Sunderland pie

'Look with the lights on and check under the lid' was one of many pearls given by Mr Sajjid Ahmad (Liverpool) when assessing patients with cicatrising keratitis. Timely control of inflammation alongside measures to lessen the 'inflammatory soup' on the corneal surface significantly improve outcomes in this devastating disease.

Mr Stephen Morgan then gave an entertaining account of the Sunderland experience of postoperative infective endophthalmitis (PIE) after phacoemulsification and Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCO) benchmarking standards for cataract surgical complications.



President David Cottrell presenting the annual free paper prize to Yunzi Chen and Ronak Patel.

### Rage against the phaco machine

Mr David Allen (Sunderland) closed the meeting with a great presentation on refinement of phacoemulsification settings and ophthalmic viscosurgical devices (OVD) usage to improve surgical technique. An understanding of the range and limitations of devices we employ in cataract surgery reduces complication rates and stress levels in theatre.

### NEOS Centenary in October 2014

The spring meeting was highly enjoyable with a stimulating mix of educational lectures and friendly debate. Thanks must go to the numerous sponsors who provided a great trade exhibition and funded the meeting.

This October, NEOS will celebrate its centenary with a two-day event at Old Trafford, Manchester (2-3 October). UK NEOS will play host to its American cousin, the New England Ophthalmological society and Professor Talamo (Harvard) is due to give the guest lecture.

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