

OIUF

THE OCULAR IMMUNOLOGY
AND UVEITIS FOUNDATION

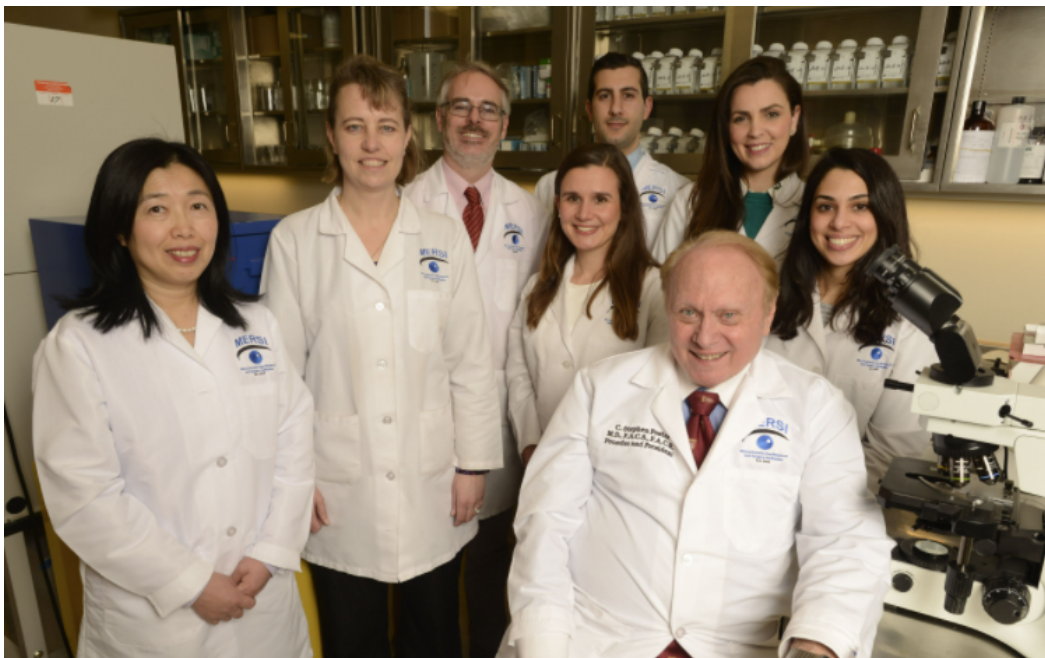
Dedicated to Eye Disease Cure and Education

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Newsletter**

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Letter From Our President



This past year, the Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Foundation celebrated 15 years of leadership in the global uveitis and ocular immunology community. As we've operated in this pandemic, I've been reminded of the far reaching impact those connected with the Foundation have had and am truly grateful to have shared in the unwavering commitment to our core mission. I hope the cover story of this issue: "The History of Uveitis: How Perspectives Have Changed Through a Collective Lens" evokes a sense of pride in all of us for the strides we've made in our field on behalf of patients, caregivers, supporters and all individuals associated with OIUF. Reflecting on the past fifteen years, the past two in particular, it is important to highlight a few of our many organizational successes.

C. Stephen Foster, MD

In September 2019, OIUF held its annual educational conference in Washington D.C., The Ocular inflammatory Disease Crash Course was a monumental opportunity for OIUF to bring information and expertise to a new part of the country. We continued our national outreach campaign on October 3rd, 2020, partnering with Dr. Sanjay Kedhar of the University of California - Irvine for an online Crash Course. We navigated the challenges of the pandemic to connect patients and physicians around the world virtually in order to exchange critical information and expertise.

To maintain and grow the reach of our educational programs we rely heavily on fundraising efforts. We've worked tirelessly to expand the scope and scale of our annual walks and our OUIF annual auction has been a fantastic event and charitable success, thanks to the efforts of Andrea Patistas, the Vice President of our Board of Directors and support from the entire uveitis community. We are also grateful to have the continued support of Daniel J. Quirk and Quirk Works Subaru, who in addition to participating in the Auction, have helped secure over \$70k through the 2019/20 "Share the Love Campaign" and over 174K since the first annual campaign launched in 2015.

As any visitor to OIUF's boardroom will recall, lining the walls are years of pictures of former Fellow classes. I am proud of all of the former and current fellows highlighted in this newsletter as well as all ocular immunology and uveitis trained fellows who have exceeded even their own expectations. Dr. David Chu and Dr. Victor Perez both examples of this and well deserving of the 2019 and 2020 Advancing Frontiers in Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Award and Dr's Razzaque Ahmed and Miriam Barshak(first two recipients of the Enlightenment Award : In Research & Education) are equally praiseworthy for taking time out of their busy schedule to share their expertise with our fellows year after year. While the herculean task of training the next generation of ocular immunologists is larger than any one faculty or teacher, I am proud to say that the Foster Ocular Immunology Center at Duke University has now been up and running and aiding the fight for over 2 years.

Together we have all been working towards a bright future for those with uveitis and ocular inflammatory diseases. I have seen all the amazing feats those connected to OIUF have accomplished since its inception and the impact on the history of uveitis we have had while searching for cures and treatments for this stubborn and potentially blinding ocular inflammatory diseases. Thank you for your role in our community and in helping to fulfill OIUF's mission. On behalf of all the patients and family members who will benefit because of your generosity, I extend my sincere gratitude.

With sincerest best wishes for a Health and Happy New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Stephen Foster". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light blue background.

C. Stephen Foster

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Our Mission

The Ocular Immunology and Uveitis Foundation is a 501c(3), national non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

Our mission is to find cures for ocular inflammatory diseases, to erase the worldwide deficit of properly trained ocular immunologists, and to provide education and emotional support for those patients afflicted with ocular inflammatory disease.

How You Can Make A Visible Difference

Your gifts and donations help the work of the Ocular Immunology and Uveitis Foundation in achieving our mission.

To help meet your philanthropic goals, OIUF accepts gifts of many types, including appreciated securities, bequests, real estate, qualified retirement and life income gifts.

Honor a Loved One

Looking for a way to honor a loved one? Create your own online fundraising event/page OR create your own Facebook fundraiser in his or her honor!

Contact ajustus@oiuf.org to learn more!

In Memorium: John A. DeLuca



"Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life." Mark Twain.

MERSI patient and OIUF supporter John A. DeLuca embodied that quote in his 40 years working at the Framingham District Court. Sadly, John died unexpectedly on Saturday, August 1, 2020. John was born in Providence, RI, to John B. and Barbara (Porter) DeLuca. He moved to Framingham when he was just 3 years old. John grew up in the Framingham Public Schools, was a graduate of Utica College, and earned his law degree from Suffolk University. In 1978, he started as an Assistant Clerk with the Framingham District Court and proudly worked his way up to Clerk Magistrate. He truly loved his career and the opportunity it afforded him to help people. John held season tickets for his beloved New England Patriots on the 50 yard line and spent many a Sunday cheering on his team. He enjoyed running and often participated in the Falmouth Road Race. More than anything John loved his family. He was a "lacrosse dad," documenting his sons' high school and college games with pictures, and was intensely delighted with his daughters artistic ability.

Upcoming Events

Due to the uncertain times, many of our events are TBD. Please check our website at uveitis.org/events for frequent updates and additional events. Thank you for your understanding.

“Virtual” Do Anything for Vision

June 6, 2021 • 2PM EST

2021 “Hybrid” Ocular Inflammatory Disease Crash Course for Physicians, Patients and Caregivers

September 18, 2021
Duke Eye Center
Durham, NC

15th Annual “Virtual” Auction Benefit & Awards Ceremony

November 6, 2021 • 7:30-8:30PM EST

Virtual Uveitis Support Groups

Join us as we discuss what it is like to live with ocular inflammatory disease. Family and friends are welcome to attend.

March 9, 2021 7:30-8:30PM EST

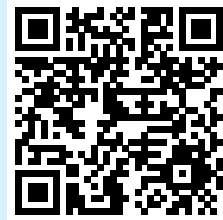
Topic: Accessibility for Apple devices

Guest Presenter: Katherine Gastler

May 4, 2021 7:30-8:30PM EST

Topic: Advocating for yourself with doctors who are less familiar with eye inflammation

Presenter: Stephen Anesi, MD



Monthly Giving

Monthly giving helps OIUF focus more of its resources on finding cures of ocular inflammatory diseases. Monthly giving is easy and secure. You choose your own monthly amount and have the freedom to alter or cancel your giving at any time. Sign up and help make a difference in the fight against ocular inflammatory diseases.



Connect with Us!

Do you want to stay up to date on the day to day of OIUF? Or maybe you're Dr. Foster's biggest fan? Then visit OIUF page and click that like button! Search for Ocular Immunology and Uveitis Foundation and be the first to know about our activities, photos, and recent events! The Ocular Immunology and Uveitis Foundation reaches over 3000 fans on Facebook—become one of them!

Sign up today at:

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/OcularImmunologyandUveitis/donations.html>

Uveitis Perspectives

“The History of Uveitis: How Perspectives Have Changed Through a Collective Lens”

by Andrew Stephenson

“I still can't be arrogantly cocky that I'm always going to get a patient into remission...but now I know when to use the big guns.”

Every ocular immunologist has his or her own progression from relative novice to confident practitioner. A journey that begins with many more questions than answers, but can eventually produce a specialist capable of immense impact in the world of ocular inflammatory disease.

Alongside the growth of these individuals is the growth of the entire field. I set out to better understand the progression of the world of uveitis through understanding the perspectives of some of the field's top physicians and how they have seen the care for uveitis patients change.

My story begins with Dr. Stephen Foster, the founder and president of OIUF and MERSI, considered by many to be the foremost expert in ocular immunology and uveitis care.

I suggest to Dr. Foster that we begin by discussing his view on uveitis during the 1970's, the time of his ophthalmology residency. He instead takes us back further, to the early 20th century. It was at this time - just a century ago - that credible physicians were still using imported French leeches alongside blister therapy to treat uveitis. What now seem like archaic practices would have been considered the highest standard of care possible for these patients - in the absence of modern medication, they may have indeed been right.

1949 brought the advent of a miracle drug - perhaps the greatest step forwards both in uveitis care and in fighting systemic inflammation - corticosteroids. “It was the equal of penicillin for inflammation” says Foster. However, as any patient with a history of extended steroid use knows, that reprieve from inflammation came with a price - the multitude of steroid-induced adverse effects on the body. Nonetheless, the benefits of steroid therapy were



readily apparent to patient and practitioner alike and created a large-scale shift in the way inflammation was treated. It would not be until roughly two decades later when the perspective on what would eventually constitute the standard of care would shift again.

In 1966, an NIH research named Dr. Vernon Wong decided to begin treating uveitis patients with intravenous methotrexate instead of using steroids. With IV methotrexate, Dr. Wong had pushed OID care towards a more successful and sustainable path for patients; one that took a while to catch on, according to Foster. “When I started my residency at Wash U, and even when I got to Mass Eye [and Ear Infirmary] no one was doing it.” Slowly, Wong's results were published and disseminated, although not widely utilized by ophthalmologists unfamiliar to this treatment modality.

The issue of timely dissemination of clinically important information and the adoption thereof has always been a central problem in uveitis care. In fact, years before Dr. Wong began his IV methotrexate trials, a Spanish physician was successfully using a compound derived from mustard gas to treat his patients; this marked the first time a non-steroidal medication had been shown to successfully treat uveitis. His mistake? Publishing in the Spanish literature which was largely unread outside of Spain.

Every individual I spoke with gave a similar account regarding the importance of sharing findings with others.



With time, the primary modes of communication in the ophthalmic community have shifted - along with the newest scientific methods. "Introducing and permanently placing material in the record" is still the primary purpose of academic journals, says Stephen Anesi, MD, who is an OIUF board member and MERSI physician. While these journals remain the standard for rigorously peer-reviewed information - as they have been for decades - the Internet and indexed database have fundamentally changed how practitioners access and evaluate the literature. Gone are the days of print journals alone. The latest journal articles and clinical trial data are now easily accessed via smartphones and tablets at a moments notice.

There is no substitute for in person, peer-to-peer discussion, however, as many experts made clear. "Meetings are very important, particularly smaller meetings where you can actually discuss how you manage patients" says Moran Eye Center Uveitis and Retina specialist, Dr. Albert Vitale. Many advancements in surgical techniques and imaging technologies are often mentioned in meetings well before they make their way into printed publications, and thus physicians can implement new diagnostic and treatment modalities much sooner. Additionally, conferences are another avenue by which knowledge can be disseminated to the broader community of general ophthalmologists, optometrists, and patients (often in the form of online video streams and downloadable presentations).

I asked many of the practitioners I spoke with how increased interconnectedness of scientific data and clinical experience impacts training. They doubted any substantial change - instead emphasizing that key tenants of fellowship training remain constant.

"A lot of doctors aren't up to speed on how to treat ocular inflammation so they are just relying on steroids." Frances Foster, NP, states. "People should not be going blind from uveitis in this day and age and yet we still see it." She believes there is no substitute for a rigorous fellowship training program when it comes to spreading knowledge of how to care for those afflicted with OID. She posits that while many physicians have seen the data and read the important literature, they still lack the confidence to treat uveitis in an appropriate manner.

Fellowship training still needs to be done in a holistic fashion, says Dr. Albert Vitale. "In terms of fellowship training now, I think there are more people interested in combining sub-specialties" he says. Stephen Foster has not changed his approach to training ocular immunologists over the past several decades: "it takes hands on experience over a course of time [...] they have to learn about the drugs and they learn that by seeing the outcomes over a one year period."

Even globally, where the data on proper uveitis care is readily available, a lack of training hinders the progress of uveitis care. "[In Russia] if you have patients with uveitis you need to send them to a rheumatologist, you can treat them with steroid drops and it's possible to treat with IMT (immunomodulatory therapy) but that would be work for a rheumatologist" says Dr. Marina Peskina, a Russian ophthalmologist and former fellow with OIUF.

In trying to get a sense of what the milestones in uveitis care that each individual has experienced over their careers, a few ideas emerge.

First, the importance of collaborative science. Drs. Vitale, Anesi, Foster and others pointed to several key consortiums focused on obtaining more reliable

evidence based data. “Things in uveitis that I can point to as being the most influential in my mind [include] The SUN Working Group standardizing how we present data and clinical findings [... and the] SITE data showing that medications were safe to use (Kempen et al. BMJ 2009)” says Dr. Anesi. SUN, SITE, and MUST were all cited as some of the most influential collaborative projects to date. This collaboration is not only limited to multi-center research trials, but also includes collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. In the past, Uveitis was considered an “orphan disease” and very few pharmaceutical companies were interested in devoting time and money into developing a drug for it. Fortunately, this has changed to some degree in recent years because of the increased awareness of the condition. In fact, Dr. Foster cites AbbVie’s investment in uveitis and successful bid for FDA approval of adalimumab as a uveitis therapy as the single most important moment of change in the field during his career.

Second, most individuals cited a specific scientific advance such as: the introduction of biologic agents to treat uveitis, a key paper defending the use of IMT therapy, new imaging technologies, or the defense of certain implantable sustained release devices as key moments for uveitis care. Dr. Peter Chang, a combined Retina/Uveitis specialist and co-partner with Drs. Foster and Anesi at MERSI, cites wide-field fluorescein angiography (WFA) as an example of such advancement: “WFA allows detection of retinal vasculitis in the periphery of the retina that was either invisible or poorly seen on older cameras. An eye thought to be quiet may indeed be actively inflamed, thus prompting us to employ more aggressive treatment. It has made a visible difference -pun fully intended- in our care of uveitis patients.”

Lastly, some individuals pointed to a revolution in patient advocacy sparked by the internet. “I think the major change in uveitis care for patients is

the internet because now people can lookup the updated treatment options and also find specialists. They can be their own advocate versus relying on their doctors” says Frances Foster. Dr. Vitale noted the importance of informative sites like Uveitis.org or the American Uveitis Society’s website. Most have mixed feelings about WebMD and similar sites, but generally agreed that informed patients are more receptive and less fearful to follow their physician’s advice. “I actually believe that social media should and will be very important in spreading information and education in the future, much more than people realize now” says Anesi.

Not only can patients utilize the internet to find the latest treatment options and best local specialists, they can also use it to support one another through long medical struggles. Facebook, instagram, online blogs, and many other mediums have been crucial to connecting those dealing with this rare condition.

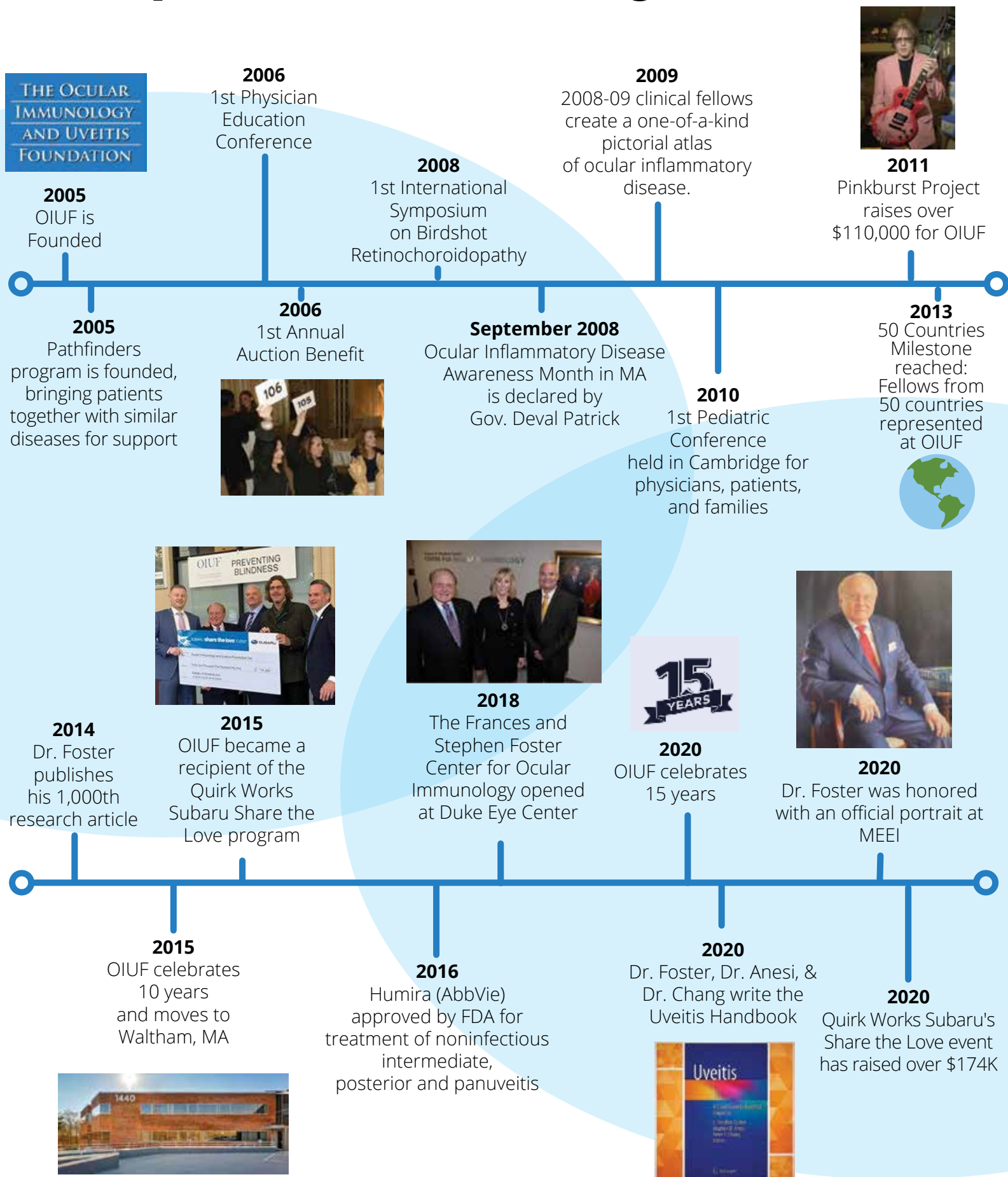
Additionally, Frances Foster says one of the largest changes she’s seen has been the advent of support groups. “When we started there was nothing.” Now, MERSI’s support group - held bi-monthly - is an irreplaceable tool to help those struggling with these conditions find strength and camaraderie.

While the basics of care - including the stepladder approach - have yet to change, ocular immunologists are quick to acknowledge the substantial shifts in their field. New technologies have led to more targeted and efficacious treatment options; new mediums connect the world to share data, experiences, and support; and collaborative research binds otherwise distant companies and centers through a shared desire to push the envelope of care.

Clearly, there is still change, growth, and uncertainty coming in the next several decades, but with properly trained individuals leading the charge who are willing to work with one another as well as their patients, the future of the field looks bright.



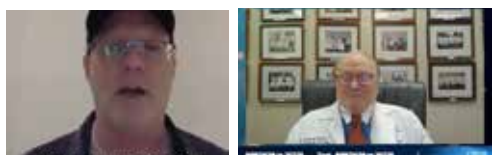
History of OIUF: Celebrating 15 Years



MAKING A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE...

13th Annual Auction Benefit

The 13th Annual Making a Visible Difference Auction Benefit and Awards Ceremony was held at the Fairmont Copley Hotel on Saturday November 9th, 2019. In addition to having a patient share her uveitis story (Mary Blais, top right), 2019 marked the beginning of a new tradition of distributing two Awards; The Advancing Frontiers: in Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Award was created to acknowledge the work of a former Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Fellow who has carried out OIUF's mission. Dr. David Chu (pictured top left) was the recipient of this inaugural award and Dr. Razzique Ahmed (pictured lower right) was the first recipient of the Enlightenment Award: In Research & Education for enthusiastically lecturing OIUF's fellows since the Foundation's inception. The event followed the annual tradition of having former and current fellows in the room (center photo) stand up while Master of Ceremonies and auctioneer Chris Collins encouraged guests to raise their paddels and "fund a need" in support of OIUF's fellowship Program. Many thanks to Andrea Patisteas and Mia's Army for helping expand this fundraising event and raising over 140k for our research and educational efforts.



14th Annual (Virtual) Auction Benefit

On Saturday October 24th, 2020 OIUF welcomed over 200 guests virtually to the 14th Annual "Making A Visible Difference" Auction Benefit for an evening of impact and fun. As Dr. Foster stated, "despite the virtual platform the program still embodies the dedication, passion and soul of our annual live event." Highlights included an appearance by OIUF Champion and Founder & lead guitarist of Twisted Sister John "Jay Jay" French (pictured bottom left), "Watch Parties" hosted by Co-Chairs Mia' Army & The Paulson's as well as the Anesi family (center photos). The virtual platform allowed for Former Fellows from around the World to share the importance of OIUF's fellowship program and encouraged virtual guests to "Fund this need" and help erase the deficit of properly trained ocular immunologists. Many thanks to Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer Chris Collins as well as Tom and Sue Paulson, Andrea Patisteas and Mia's Army for co-chairing the event and their continued support.

**We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors,
without whom, these events would not be possible.**

YOUR SUPPORT HAS HELPED RAISE OVER \$230,000 FOR OIUF!

Sally & Frank Hanna

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Dan Antonelli & Rene Martin

Greg & Crissy Campo

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2019 Ocular Inflammatory Disease Crash Course for Physicians and Patients in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday September 14th, Physicians, Patients and caregivers from the greater D.C. area and beyond came together to learn the latest advances in diagnosis and treatment of ocular inflammatory disease. Patients and caregivers were also given the opportunity to participate in a support group session. Many thanks to Virginia based former Foster fellow Alla Hynes, MD for her part in planning the conference.



2019 OIUF Conference Faculty:

From L-R: Peter Netland, MD, Stephen Anesi, MD, David Chu, Rajiv Shah, MD, Peter Chang, MD, Andrea Patisteas, MD, Alla Hynes, MD, Stephen Foster, MD, Frances Foster, MD, Vyacheslav Chasnyk, MD (not pictured: Nida Sen, MD)



Dr. Nida Sen talks about "Systemic Disease with Ocular Manifestations"



Vyacheslav Chasnyk, MD, from the Head State Pediatric University in St. Petersburg shared his experience in treatment of JIA-associated uveitis in Russia

THANK YOU to all of our exhibitors and supporters for making this event possible!

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DOMPÉ

...TO COAST TO COAST!



2020 Virtual Ocular Inflammatory Disease Crash Course for Physicians and Patients

On Saturday October 3rd 2020, OIUF held the “virtual” Coast to Coast Ocular Inflammatory Disease Crash Course co- directed by Dr. Foster and Dr Sanjay Kedhar of the University of Irvine California. This unique symposium intended for ophthalmologists, pediatricians, rheumatologists, patients and caregivers involved in the care of individuals with uveitis and ocular inflammatory diseases was attended by over 220 participants. Topics included current and emerging therapies for the treatment of uveitis and ocular inflammatory disease, surgical considerations in the management of the uveitis patient, navigating insurance and Self-advocacy, how to get the best medical care. Frances Foster, NP concluded the exceptional program with a support group for patients that were interested in sharing experiences and learning about coping mechanisms from others battling OID. The virtual symposium will be offered through May 9th, 2021 OnDemand! Physicians can receive up 6.50 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits of Continuing Medical Education. Many thanks to OIUF Board members, Dr’s Anesi & Chang, David Chu, MD and Rajiv Shah, MD for sharing their knowledge with our worldwide audience. Many thanks also to the additional world renowned faculty, Gary Holland, John Gonzales, Sameh Mosaed, MD and Patient speaker Lauren Freed. Special thanks to Dr. Kedhar for his eagerness to partner with OIUF and helping make our first virtual educational endeavor a success.

This course would not be possible without our exhibitors and supporters:

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PHARMACEUTICALS



Please visit www.oidcrashcourse2020.org or scan the QR Code below to learn more about the conference and register today.

Please stay tuned for details regarding stand-alone Q&A sessions with faculty members.



SAVING VISION

from "One Step at a Time"...

Walk for Vision 2019

In 2019, OIUF began to take steps to expand our "Walk for Vision" beyond Boston and New Jersey.

On Sunday, August 25th, 2019, OIUF held the annual Walk for Vision around the Charles River. The event returned to the Royal Sonata hotel for a delicious brunch and talk by Dr. Foster and patient speaker Joe Masarelli.

Sunday, September 13th, 2019 marked the 12th annual Walk for Vision in New Jersey around the Verona Park Boathouse in Verona, New Jersey. Many thanks to Lauren Jacobs Lazer and her family for 12 years of fundraising success! Additionally a heartfelt thank you to the rest of the New Jersey/New York walk committee. OIUF Board member David Chu, MD, Sylvia Stern, Tracy Grieco and Milton & Eileen Fong for their help in organizing the walk.

Sunday October 27th was supposed to be the Inaugural walk for vision in Denver. Due to an unexpected and unseasonal snow storm, walkers were resigned to walk in spirit for the inaugural year. Many thanks to former OIUF fellow and Denver based Mark Dacey for initiating the fundraising initiative, as well as Cheryl O'Connor and Linda Garby with their families.



...to "One Click at a Time"!

Virtual Walk: Do Anything for Vision 2020

On Sunday September 13th OIUF held the "2020 Do Anything for Vision" event. Given unprecedented times, the fundraising effort pivoted to a virtual event and was altered to a "Do Anything for Vision." Following in the tradition of past Walks, Frances Foster was the Master of ceremonies. The virtual event featured Uveitis Patient and New Jersey Walk for Vision Founder Lauren Jacobs-Laser, OIUF Board Member, David Chu, MD, Former fellow and Colorado Walk founder, w, Dr. Mark Dacey. Dr. Stephen Anesi, whose children jumped for vision, challenged the virtual audience to show their craziest socks, while Dr. Peter Chang contested fundraisers to sharing pictures of kissing their pets on social media.

**We are extremely grateful to our Walk for Vision sponsors,
without whom, these events would not be possible.**

YOUR SUPPORT HAS HELPED RAISE OVER \$198,000 FOR OIUF!

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Former Fellow Spotlights

Arash Maleki, MD

"IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE FOR ME TO WORK AS A FELLOW WITH DR. FOSTER, THE MOST WELL-KNOWN UVEITIS SPECIALIST AND OCULAR IMMUNOLOGIST ALL AROUND THE WORLD."

Arash Maleki, MD



Born in Iran to two well educated parents, Arash achieved his lifelong dream in 1999, when he graduated from one of Iran's most prestigious medical schools, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. He pursued a residency in ophthalmology at Iran University of Medical sciences. Wishing to broaden his scope of practice, he then completed a fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery at Iran University of Medical sciences. Intrigued by complicated uveitic cases, he sought and secured a research fellowship in uveitis and ocular immunology for one year at the Ocular inflammation and Uveitis Foundation in 2015 under Dr. Stephen Foster's mentorship. "It was unbelievable for me to work as a fellow with Dr. Foster, the most well-known uveitis specialist and ocular immunologist all around the world with hundreds of textbooks and one thousand valuable papers in this field", Arash said. He continued, "With many questions in my mind, incredible data pool at MERSI, and knowledgeable mentor like Dr. Foster, I completed twelve research projects during my fellowship which was impossible without dedicated team and team work at MERSI and OIUF". After leaving MERSI and OIUF in 2016, Arash tried to set up similar settings in Iran; however, this never happened because of the limitations and restrictions there. Even the Visiting Scholar and Visiting Instructor positions at Stanford did not satisfy him. Eventually, with Dr. Foster's and his wife Frances' support and generosity, Arash joined OIUF as a "Research Associate" for three years last year. He names MERSI and OIUF as his second home. He says, "I do not feel homesick here because of very friendly and nice staff". He hopes with Dr. Foster's, Dr. Anesi's, Dr. Chang's and all MERSI and OIUF team's help and support, he will be able to do his part and help people with uveitis.

Pooja Bhat, MD

I had the honor and privilege of being a fellow with the OIUF Fellowship program at MERSI from July 2006 until June 2008. I owe my passion to help uveitis patients and my career in ophthalmology to Dr. Foster and OIUF. I grew up, went to medical school and received some ophthalmology training in Bombay, India. I came to the United States in 2004, completed one year of preliminary general surgery internship at NorthShore Long Island Jewish Hospital in NY and became an OIUF Fellow in 2006. Dr. Foster had just moved from the MEEI to MERSI. At the time, MERSI was in Kendall Square, a state-of-the-art facility, with its own infusion suite, multiple exam lanes, designated Fellows' area, lab space with microscopes on display monitors and much more. I had never seen anything like it. It was my first introduction to EMR. And Dr. Foster was so forthcoming about the transition. He shared his joy and his fears with us. The Fellowship program at MERSI set the bar high not only in terms of patient care, but also in terms of education and mentorship and what it means to never give

"I OWE MY PASSION TO HELP UVEITIS PATIENTS AND MY CAREER IN OPHTHALMOLOGY TO DR. FOSTER AND OIUF."

up- not only on the patients and their fight against inflammation, but also on learning, and goals for oneself. So many opportunities came my way at OIUF and because of Dr. Foster. I helped patients, learned from them, participated in research and presented my work nationally. I also learned what it means to be a true mentor, to champion your mentee, from Dr. Foster. I remember distinctly his words to us Fellows when we started "Read an hour everyday- do not let the sights and sounds of Boston beguile you- a year is a short time". I still think of his words. At meetings, I had the opportunity to meet other OIUF Fellows, make connections and most importantly continue learning. My foray into ophthalmic pathology was inspired by Dr. Foster. During our lab meeting days, Dr. Foster would look at and read slides of tissues he had biopsied. I wanted that knowledge and ability for myself and with Dr. Foster championing me, I became an ophthalmic pathology fellow at MEEI with Dr. Frederick Jakobiec. That was a monumental opportunity as well and for me, all these experiences at MERSI and MEEI led to an ophthalmology residency at Northwestern University, another uveitis fellowship also at Northwestern University and a faculty position at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, University of Illinois at Chicago where I currently practice as a uveitis specialist. I have so many fond memories of Dr. Foster, Frances, Scott, Alison, my co-Fellows and my time in Boston. I will forever be grateful and endeavor to carry forward Dr. Foster's legacy of patient care, education and mentorship.

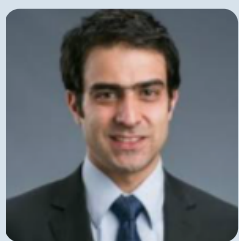
"I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL AND ENDEAVOR TO CARRY FORWARD DR. FOSTER'S LEGACY OF PATIENT CARE, EDUCATION, AND MENTORSHIP."

Pooja Bhat, MD



THE COMPLEXITY OF THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF OID AND HIS EXPERIENCE AT OIUF, MOTIVATED DR. GONZALEZ TO PURSUE FORMAL TRAINING IN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS.

Luis A Gonzalez, MD



Luis A. Gonzalez, MD

Originally from Mexico, Dr. Luis A Gonzalez, started with the MERSI and OIUF family in 2010 for a three month uveitis rotation as part of his ophthalmology residency training at the Monterrey Institute of Technology in Northern Mexico, one of the top academic hospitals in Latin America. His interest in uveitis and his experience during this rotation, motivated him to continue his training under Dr. Foster for another year and a half. During his fellowship, he was very involved in research and publications. He undertook the scleritis project where, along with Dr. Maite Sainz de la Maza and Dr. Foster, they collected and analyzed the largest cohort of patients with scleritis and episcleritis. The results from this series of patients are now the guidelines in the treatment of scleral inflammatory disorders. He also participated in projects to make ocular inflammatory disorders diagnosis and treatment more available for patients and providers. He helped organize the Childhood Uveitis Symposium and worked with Dr. Stephen Anesi to draft together a monograph that compiled the key leaders' opinions. The complexity of the epidemiology of ocular inflammatory diseases and his experience at MERSI and OIUF, motivated Dr. Gonzalez to pursue formal training in epidemiology and biostatistics. After completing his Master in Public Health from the Harvard University School of Public Health, he participated in several epidemiology database analyses at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary - Boston Veterans Affairs Healthcare System. After completing his ophthalmology residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Dr. Gonzalez pursued a fellowship in Vitreoretinal Surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. He currently practices in Northern Jersey at NJRetina.

Doran Spencer, MD

Originally from California, Dr. Spencer has a long and varied experience with ocular immunology and uveitis. After an undergraduacy at the Honor's College at the University of Oregon, he spent four years in France and West Africa working at the Pasteur Institute where he gained firsthand experience with infectious diseases, including Ebola. He then completed his MD and PhD training in Portland, Oregon where he studied the role of regulatory T cells in a mouse model of uveitis under the supervision of Dr. Jim Rosenbaum, a Rheumatologist and Uveitis expert. After his residency in Ophthalmology at the University of California, Irvine, Dr. Spencer began an ocular immunology fellowship at OIUF. During his formative year, Dr. Spencer gained tremendous experience with the diagnosis and treatment of thousands of uveitis patients with immunomodulatory therapy (IMT). Subsequently, he received training as a Retina surgeon at the University of California, San Diego, during which time he treated many uveitis patients with IMT. He then joined the faculty at UCSD as a full-time Uveitis and Retina specialist. He is the only Uveitis specialist for pediatric patients in the San Diego area, and prioritizes immunomodulatory therapy in order to avoid the inevitable side-effects of chronic steroid treatment. He is an established clinician-scientist in the field of ocular immunology and has several research projects underway investigating novel findings in uveitis, including in collaboration with the experts at MERSI. This includes studying the ocular side-effects of cancer immunotherapy, which causes uveitis in some patients. As an active and accomplished surgeon, Dr. Spencer is able to address the surgical complications of uveitis patients, including cataracts and retinal pathology.

DURING HIS FORMATIVE YEAR, DR. SPENCER GAINED TREMENDOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF THOUSANDS OF UVEITIS PATIENTS [AT OIUF].

Doran Spencer, MD



IN ESSENTIALLY EVERY WAY, DOING A FELLOWSHIP WITH DR. FOSTER AND OIUF CHANGED ROBERT'S LIFE.

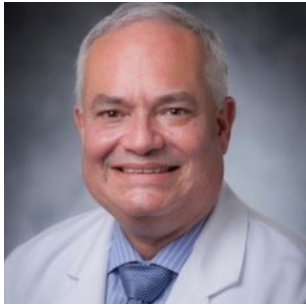
Robert Swan, MD



Robert Swan, MD

Robert Swan, MD was raised in Upstate New York. He went to medical school at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY, where he met his future wife Becca. They both did internships at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, NY, and residency at Albany Medical Center in Albany, NY. Fate (and a little luck) led them both to Boston where Becca did a fellowship in Breast Imaging and Robert trained at MERSI. From there, they went back to Syracuse, NY. In essentially every way, doing a fellowship with Dr. Foster and OIUF changed Robert's life. Arriving in Syracuse, both patients and referring physicians alike believed, having worked with Dr. Foster, that Robert would know exactly what to do. At times that was completely true, but ocular inflammation isn't learned in a year. The most valuable thing Robert learned from Dr. Foster and Anesi was a diagnostic and therapeutic approach to ocular inflammation. This approach allows one to ask the right question that leads to the right answer - both in the patient room and in the Pubmed medical database (often using Dr. Foster's articles!). With these tools, continued collaboration with his co-fellows, and an occasional email to Dr. Foster, Robert has been able to provide superb ophthalmic care to the Central New York region. At present, he is blessed with three children and is the director of the Ophthalmology Residency program at SUNY Upstate. In 2018 he won both Provider of the Year and Program Director of the Year.

Auction Benefit Award Recipients



2020 Advancing Frontiers: in Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Award Victor Perez, MD

Dr. Perez is an established clinician-scientist investigator in the field of ocular immunology and ocular surface diseases and is the director of the Foster Center for Ocular Immunology. His lab is focused on researching immunology of corneal transplantation and ocular Graft vs Host Disease. He is a former fellow of Dr. Foster's and is currently the acting professor at the Frances and Stephen Foster Center for Ocular Immunology at Duke University.



2020 Enlightenment Award: In Research & Education Miriam Barshak, MD

Dr. Barshak is an infectious disease specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital. Along with working closely with the doctors at MERSI, she is also involved in the education of OIUF's fellows. She presents a seminar yearly to the current research and clinical fellows. In addition, she has worked on multiple publications on the connection between infectious disease and ocular involvement.



2019 Advancing Frontiers: in Ocular Immunology & Uveitis Award Winner David Chu, MD

Dr. David Chu, Former Foster Fellow, is the Founder and Director of Metropolitan Eye Research and Surgery Institute of New York and New Jersey, where he specializes in ocular immunology and corneal transplantation. He is also a professor of ophthalmology at the New Jersey Medical School of Rutgers University, where he teaches residents and medical students. Dr. Chu strives to provide cutting-edge medical and surgical options for patients with complex ocular conditions. He currently serves on the boards of OIUF and Survey of Ophthalmology.



2019 Enlightenment Award Winner: In Research & Education A Razzaque Ahmed, MD

Dr. A. Razzaque Ahmed is the Director of the Center Blistering Diseases and Professor of Dermatology, Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA. He received the "Doctor of The Year" Award, by the International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation, and the Walter Level Award, given once in 25 years. He has received Life Time Achievement and Excellence Award from seven countries in four continents. His scholarship, persistent commitment, and continued dedication has left an impact of dermatology worldwide.

Uveitis Support Group

The Uveitis/OID Support Group is a patient education and mutual support resource founded in 1996 by Dr. Foster, Frances Foster MS, NP, John Hurley LISW, and patients of Dr. Foster. Our mission is to educate patients, their family members and friends, and the medical community about ocular inflammatory disease and to facilitate the exchange of information, emotional support, and mutual aid between members. We are also deeply committed to raising funds to support research related to the causes and effective treatment of uveitis/OID. Please take advantage of all our free services in this upcoming year: our in person support group meetings, as well as resources on the OIUF website (uveitis.org)—featuring a support group page for adults, parents, and children, parent/teacher guides, and a Guide to Ocular Inflammatory disease. Our multifarious support system runs on the generous contributions to the Foundation from our support group members and their family and friends. Every year, we hold six support group meetings. The meetings are committed to emotional support. Negativity has no place in our circle, and medical advice is given only to those who seek it and only from physicians and medical professionals. This year, our meetings will be held virtually. Refer to the event calendar on **Page 4**. You can also access links to other resources on our website under the “Support Group” tab. Join our online community— never feel alone in your or your loved one’s fight against uveitis or OID!

Virtual Support Group: March 9, 2021

Topic: Accessibility for Apple devices
Guest presenter: Katherine Gastler

Strategies for using iPhones and iPads with low vision. Learn about tools included in iOS to continue using your Apple devices during a flare-up. Suggestions for apps and settings to customize your device if reading the screen is uncomfortable.



Katherine Gastler is an IT professional with a focus on making technology understandable and accessible to everyone. She currently works at Jolt Technology and previously taught classes at Apple Retail stores for 6 years on a variety of topics, specializing in photography and vision accessibility. First diagnosed with uveitis 14 years ago, Katherine understands periods of low vision and is passionate about helping others use technology to achieve their goals.

Uveitis Parent Support Group

Having a child with uveitis is difficult; the frequent doctors’ visits and emotional strain is debilitating. If you are interested in joining a support group specific for parents, please contact Alison Justus: ajustus@oiuf.org.

OIUF’s OID guides are now available in the Amazon Kindle Store! Uveitis: A Guide for Teacher’s and Parents aims to assist parents and teachers in understanding uveitis as a disease and in how to help support those children—both inside and outside of the classroom—who are diagnosed with uveitis. A Guide to Ocular Inflammatory Disease (*just updated*) is a practical and concise reference that provides a clear overview of ocular inflammatory diseases. A description of diagnostic features, treatment options and support groups is presented. This book is intended for all levels.

We would like to thank the following sponsors for their support in making this updated guide possible:



**Scan the QR Code
above to access
the documents
from this Virtual
Support Group**

Research Highlights

Mallinckrodt IIT (Acthar Gel)

This is a phase IV clinical trial of a repository corticotropin injection (H.P. Acthar Gel) in order to treat non-infectious retinal vasculitis. Throughout the duration of this open label study, the safety and efficacy of the treatment is evaluated. As of late October, this study is fully enrolled with a total of 40 study patients

YUTIQ Registry

This is a phase IV retrospective registry to collect real-world data on patients that have received YUTIQ. We will be following the patient visits and collecting information for up to 5 years after they first get YUTIQ. Anyone who has received a YUTIQ injection qualifies for this study.

Sylentis Dry eye and Sjogren's Disease Study

This is a phase III study looking at the safety and efficacy of the study drug (in eye drop form) on treating dry eye in patients that have been diagnosed with Sjogren's Disease. We are looking to enroll 7 patients in this study which lasts for a total of 3 months (5 study visits in total).

OIUF receives weekly updates from ResearchGate regarding statistics surrounding the number of times our research has been viewed, cited, and downloaded. While the results have always been quite astounding, Dr. Foster has been ranked the most read author and the most downloaded researcher in his field multiple times in the past several months. We have shared the latest total numbers below. Thank you again for your continued support in allowing physicians and patients from across the world to access the novel discoveries conducted at OIUF each day.

Number of times our work has been cited: **31,836**

Number of times our work has been viewed/
downloaded: **63,388**

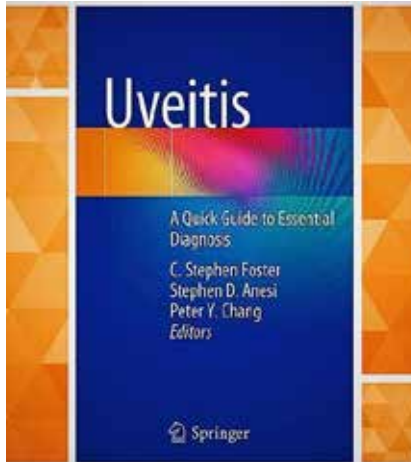


Recent Manuscripts Accepted for Publication by OIUF Current Fellows

- Combination of Intravenous Methotrexate and Methylprednisolone Therapy in the Treatment of Severe Ocular Inflammatory Diseases. Published by OII. Ocul Immunol Inflamm
- Fixed-Luminance and Multi-Luminance Flicker Electroretinography Parameters in Patients with Active Birdshot Chorioretinopathy. Published by OII. Ocul Immunol Inflamm
- Diagnostic and Prognostic Roles of Serum Interleukin-6 Levels in Patients with Uveitis. Published by OII. Ocul Immunol Inflamm
- Tocilizumab Employment in the Treatment of Resistant Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Associated Uveitis. Published by OII. Ocul Immunol Inflamm
- Topical interferon alpha 2b in the treatment of resistant diabetic macular edema. Published in JOVR
- Efficacy and Safety of Infliximab in HLA-B27 Associated Ocular Inflammation Refractory or Intolerant To Conventional Immunomodulatory Therapy.
- Vascular abnormalities in uveitis. Published by Survey of Ophthalmology.
- Serpiginous Choroiditis Refractory to Oral Prednisone and Chlorambucil Treatment. Published by AJO case reports.
- Response to the Second TNF- α Inhibitor (Adalimumab or Infliximab) after Failing the First One in Refractory Idiopathic Retinal Vasculitis. - Published by Ocular Inflammation and Immunology
- Widefield fundus fluorescein angiography features of uveitis associated with JIA. - Published by OII

Featured Publication: "Uveitis: A Quick Guide to Essential Diagnosis"

by C. Stephen Foster, Stephen D. Anesi, & Peter Y. Chang



You can access this quick guide using the following QR Code:



Focusing solely on uveitis care, this quick reference guide will provide a compiled and easy to navigate differential diagnosis – making an often daunting task for clinicians easier, quicker, and more accurate by using a concise outline format to list the most critical aspects of a disease entity. Uveitis: A Quick Guide to Essential Diagnosis opens with a Diagnosis Flowchart, so that the reader can select the most probable diagnoses based on patient's history and exam. From there the reader can then quickly turn to the corresponding chapter to learn about the most critical aspects of the disease entity: epidemiology, characteristic exam and imaging findings, prognostic factors, and treatment options. This book is written for ophthalmic care providers including general ophthalmologists, subspecialists, fellows, residents and optometrists and features research and contributions from institutions that are global leaders in uveitis care.

Q: How did the idea for this book come about?

Peter Chang, MD: Dr. Foster has always wanted to do a book like this ever since he was at MEEI but nobody ever really pick up the project, so when Steve and I spoke to each other couple years, we said let's make this thing a reality. It is a handbook-style, quick reference book in outline format. When you see a particular Uveitis entity, you can flip to that chapter and get the most high-yield facts, clinical findings, testing, and treatment. Creating this handbook was a collaborative effort and would not have been possible if it wasn't for all the former fellows and their current trainees.

Q: What is your intended audience? How will this help the field of Ophthalmology?

Stephen Anesi, MD: Because we cant have ocular immunologists in every ophthalmology office in the country - there are people who won't have access to care like this - and they want to know how to have the same approach that we take. Our goal is for this book to be a staple in everyone's library. Doctors can reference it and easily apply the workup and management principals that we use here at OIUF and MERSI to their own patients.



THE OCULAR IMMUNOLOGY
AND UVEITIS FOUNDATION

Dedicated to Eye Disease Cure and Education

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www.uveitis.org

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Publications of Interest to Physicians and Patients for Sale

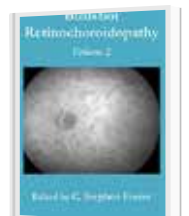
Foster, CS; Anesi, SD; Chang, PY. Uveitis: A Quick Guide to Essential Diagnosis Cost \$89.00

This quick reference guide will provide a compiled and easy to navigate differential diagnosis – making an often daunting task for clinicians easier, quicker, and more accurate.



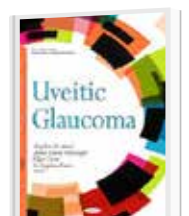
Foster CS. Birdshot Retinochoroidopathy Volume Two. 2013. Cost \$30.00

This Monograph is based on lectures delivered from the 2nd International Symposium on Birdshot Retinochoroidopathy held in Boston on September 28, 2013.



Anesi, SD; Metzinger, JL; Ceron, O; Foster, CS. Uveitic Glaucoma, 2016. Cost \$144.00

Uveitic Glaucoma provides an overview of the disease, as well as the pathophysiology, diagnosis, management, and an examination of the disease in specific populations. The term “uveitic glaucoma” is used to describe glaucoma associated with uveitis or ocular inflammation. In this publication, we emphasize a “hands-on” medical and surgical approach aimed at educating patients and practitioners with topic sections crafted in a concise, manageable way. This textbook is essential for both comprehensive ophthalmologists and specialists looking for more guidance in dealing with this complicated disease.



Order these and other publications directly from OIUF at www.uveitis.org