

European Academy

EAOO Newsletter Spring/Summer 2011

Academy to meet in Prague

Over 200 delegates from 24 countries will attend the Academy's 2011 annual conference. The meeting takes place in Prague from 4 – 6 May 2011. This is the Academy's third meeting and this year's conference programme offers more variety than ever before. The programme has attracted interest from a diverse range of practitioners and academics across Europe.

Delegates will benefit from academic and research lectures and panel presentations, two dedicated poster presentation sessions, hands-on education and clinical workshops at the Vision Care Institute, Johnson & Johnson, round-table discussion groups and educational and clinical case study sessions.



This year the Academy's conference incorporates the European Educators Congress which previously combined meetings for Twinning Optometric Universities (TUPO) and Central and Eastern European Optical and Optometric Educators.

Membership grows

Academy membership has grown and now stands at 223 individuals and 67 organisations.

Membership of the Academy is the way colleagues, patients and the public can recognise your professional status and your commitment to the continuous development of your skills, knowledge and understanding.

"I hope that through the knowledge exchange, facilitated by the Academy, Europe's optometry schools will take a big step forward towards a stronger research-based education, which will lead to a stronger profession. The annual meetings are a great place to get informed about research projects conducted in Europe in the field of optometry."

Academy member



Academy Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge our major sponsors for their ongoing support.

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European Academy of Optometry and Optics

Changing the face of optometry and optics in Europe by engaging, educating, inspiring and motivating our educators, students, researchers and practitioners.

Benefits of membership:

- Connect to a unique international network
- Access EAOO Members logo
- Build relationships with fellow professionals
- A pathway to Fellowship
- Enhance your professional skills
- Keep up-to-date with latest news and developments
- Discounts to Academy events
- Participate in special interest groups and forums
- Access to online journals



Member fees

Individual and student membership fees are being held at 2010 levels, representing excellent value for money. There is a small increase to 500 Euros for organisations. The Academy has also now introduced a post graduate membership category at 80 Euros for 12 months membership. This falls between the 25 Euro student membership and the 150 Euro individual membership.

Trustee retires

Jean-Paul Roosen will retire from his role as Academy Trustee in May 2011. Jean-Paul was the General Secretary of the European Association of Universities, Schools and Colleges of Optometry (AEUSCO), a member of the Education Committee of the World Council of Optometry (WCO) and a member of the ECOO Management Committee for the European Diploma in Optometry and joined the Academy Board in 2009 as an inaugural Trustee. He played an important role in the development of the Academy and we thank him greatly for his contribution, enthusiasm and support.



Pilot Fellowship scheme – first Fellows announced

The first Fellows under the Academy's pilot Fellowship programme will be announced at the Academy's conference in Prague in May.

In Copenhagen last year, a small group of members volunteered to participate in a pilot programme using a portfolio route to Fellowship.

Feedback from this year's programme will be used to further develop the programme which will be formally launched later this year.

A Fellow is someone whom the Academy has recognised as having made a significant contribution to the practice of optometry or optics.

This prestigious award is an acknowledgment of commitment to the profession, experience and accomplishments.

New Fellows will be granted the affix FEAOO.



New President and Vice President announced

In May 2011 Professor Roger Crelier will succeed Dr Feike Grit as President of the European Academy of Optometry and Optics.

Professor Crelier will take over the Presidency during the Academy's annual meeting in Prague. Roger has served as Vice President since the foundation of the Academy in 2009. He qualified in 1980 as an Optician and in 1985 as a dipl. Augenoptiker at the Schweizerische Höhere Fachschule für Augenoptik (SHFA). Following a period in optometric practice Roger began to lecture at the SHFA. In 2007, when the SHFA merged with the University of Applied Science of Northern Switzerland, he became Director of the University's Institute of Optometry and in 2008 he was appointed to professorship. Professor Crelier has held various positions in optometry including member of the executive committee of the International Association of Binocular Full Correction, Convenor of the Binocular Vision section of the Board of Examiners of ECOO and Chair of the Education Committee.

Dr Paul Murphy will succeed Professor Crelier as the Academy's Vice President. Dr Murphy, a Reader and

Director of Teaching at Cardiff University's School of Optometry and Vision Science has worked in optometry for over 20 years and was elected to Vice Presidency unopposed during the recent election. Dr Murphy is a Member of the UK's College of Optometrists, a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, a Member of the International Society of Contact Lens Researchers and a Fellow of the British Contact Lens Association. He was elected onto the Academy's Board in May 2009 and will serve as Vice President for a period of two years and will be named President of the Academy in 2013.

Below: Professor Crelier and Dr Murphy



Grants approval for UK Academy member

Anglia Ruskin University's Department of Vision and Hearing Sciences has been granted approval to offer a directly registrable Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing.

It is only the second "scheme provider" in the UK for dispensing opticians. www.anglia.ac.uk/vhs



Our Facebook profile allows members to stay up-to-date with news from the Academy and the profession.

This network enables the Academy to disseminate short, timely messages about our work to our members.

News from Academy Members

Bitten by the VAO bug!

July 2011 sees EAOO member Karen Sparrow on her fifth visit to Africa, this time to Uganda, as a volunteer for Vision Aid Overseas (VAO).

She first took the plunge in 2007, when she spent two weeks in Zambia after previously being a fundraiser and supporter for VAO – and she hasn't looked back since! During that visit she was bitten by the VAO bug when she helped run a teaching programme for nurses and ophthalmic clinical officers in Lusaka and an outreach programme in a remote rural area. "It was the teaching programme that really opened my eyes," she says. "To see Zambian students gain skills and knowledge and start refracting real patients in the hospital clinic was incredibly rewarding. Add to that seeing the UK team gain confidence and experience in their ability to teach and pass on the clinical skills. Powerful stuff."

Since then, Karen has returned to Zambia three more times and now also volunteers at VAO's offices. You can read the inspirational stories of some of those Karen has helped on www.eaoo.info.



Getting glasses to Sri Lanka

In just 10 days, a team from Holland – including EAOO member Dave Block - fitted more than 400 glasses to help impoverished elderly people in Sri Lanka. That was three years ago. A second visit just a few months later saw the same group return with much needed glasses which they not only made and part sponsored themselves, but transported in their own suitcases



along with refraction equipment, leaving virtually no space for their clothes!

Since then, their original idea, to set up a 'shop' dispensing free glasses within a home for the elderly, has come to fruition and the Paul Block Optical Foundation is now a reality. "We are now hoping to get an educational scheme going to teach



people how to fit glasses and check eyesight. We will be going back to Sri Lanka, but in the meantime, we are still collecting frames for them and spreading the word in the hope that more professionals from different countries and specialisms go out there to help," explains Dave.

UK Students' spring session

Student representatives from the eight UK Optometry Universities gathered in London recently for the annual Spring forum, hosted by the Association of Optometrists (AOP).

The lively event provides a platform for them to share information and ideas, discuss student support, learning opportunities outside the curriculum, networking, careers and national student events.

For more information on student support programmes at university and beyond contact Karen Sparrow, karensparrow@aop.org.uk.

Modified ETDRS charts provide Europe-wide use

Researchers at the University of Crete have developed ETDRS charts which can be more widely read.

Containing only capital letters that are common to all three European alphabets (Latin, Greek, Cyrillic) the charts are the brainchild of Dr Sotiris Plainis, Prof Miltiadis Tsimbaris and Prof Ioannis Pallikaris. Traditional charts contain letters only from the Latin alphabet and are therefore not recognised by large sectors of the population.

Fully tested and validated, the new charts are available for measuring both distance and near/intermediate visual acuity.

Go to www.precision-vision.com for more information.

Six million drivers in Spain are visually impaired

A study carried out by the School of Optics and Optometry of Terrassa (EUOOT) of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) has found that one in four drivers in Spain – or 24% of the driving population – has vision problems. Other results of the study showed that:

- Over 58% of the sample studied wore glasses with inadequate gradation
- 62% had low contrast sensitivity
- Almost 37% of older drivers presented problems of chromatic discrimination.

It also found that visual examinations for obtaining or renewing driving licenses are not very rigorous and recommended that regulations should be tightened. The study was carried out in 2010 on a sample of 1027 drivers.

For more information, go to www.euoot.upc.edu or www.visionyvida.org.



INDUSTRY NEWS



Encouraging figures recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) indicate that worldwide visual impairment has been significantly reduced to 285 million people. Of these, 246 million have moderate to severe visual impairment, while an estimated 39 million people are blind. 63% of those with low vision and 82% of blind people are over the age of 50.

The reduction reflects investment by governments and their international development partners in improving eye health services and strategies. Socioeconomic developments in many countries have also contributed. The reduction is especially significant because the number of people over 50 – the age group most affected by visual impairment – continues to grow rapidly, increasing by 14% in the past five years.

Of the six WHO world regions, South East Asia and Western Pacific account for 73% of moderate to severe visual impairment and 58% of blindness.

It is estimated that 80% of visual impairment could be cured, treated or prevented – the top three causes of blindness being cataract, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration, while uncorrected refractive errors are the main cause for moderate to severe visual impairment.

European Academy 2012

More details about the 2012 event will be available soon.

To keep up to date, please visit www.eaoo.info.

Blanco wins prestigious award

A book documenting the realities of blindness for sufferers around the world has won the Best Photography Book of the Year Award.

Award-winning photographer Stefano de Luigi spent four years capturing images illustrating life for the visually impaired – particularly those with Onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness – in four continents and 16 countries. www.vision2020.org

Global Speciality Lens Symposium

January 26-29 2012, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Focusing on the latest techniques and technologies for the successful management of ocular conditions using speciality contact lenses, the symposium is aimed at vision care professionals in all disciplines and gives information on surgical and non-surgical options. Last year's symposium attracted over 540 participants, including 390 eye care professionals from 31 countries. www.GSLSymposium.com

ACADEMY MEMBERS – Special Interest Groups

Build your research network with other Academy members through Special Interest Group Forums. Our forums focus on the following topics:

- Binocular Vision
- Community Eye and Vision Care Services
- Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technology
- Education
- Primary Eye Care

Go to www.eaoo.info for more information



Upcoming Events

16 - 20 May, Estonia – Academy member Tallin Health Care College holds its traditional international week under the title "Research and Quality"

19 - 22 May, Germany – 24th International Congress of German Ophthalmic Surgeons, Nuremberg – www.doc-nuernberg.de

24 - 26 May, UAE – Vision-X, the 12th Optical & Ophthalmic Exhibition and Conference, Dubai

25 - 27 May, Turkey – International Educational Technology Conference, Istanbul University

27 - 29 May, BCLA, Clinical Conference & Exhibition, Manchester, UK – www.bcla.org.uk

26 - 29 May, UK – EURETINA, London – www.euretina.org

3 - 4 June, Switzerland – EUPO cpirse, Geneva – www.eupo.eu

4 - 7 June, Switzerland – Joint Congress of the European Society of Ophthalmology and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, Geneva – www.soe2011.org

17 - 18 June, Germany – 24th Annual Congress of the German Retina Society, Aachen

29 June - 2 July, France – World Glaucoma Congress, Paris

12 - 15 July, UK – Macular Carotenoids & AMD 2011, Cambridge

14 - 19 July, Italy – 8th IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience, Florence – www.ibro2011.org

11 September, Belgium – ESA 2011 Congress, Bruges – www.esa2011.eu

5 - 8 October, EVER, Crete – www.ever.be

12 - 15 October, AAO Annual Conference, Boston USA – www.aao.org

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