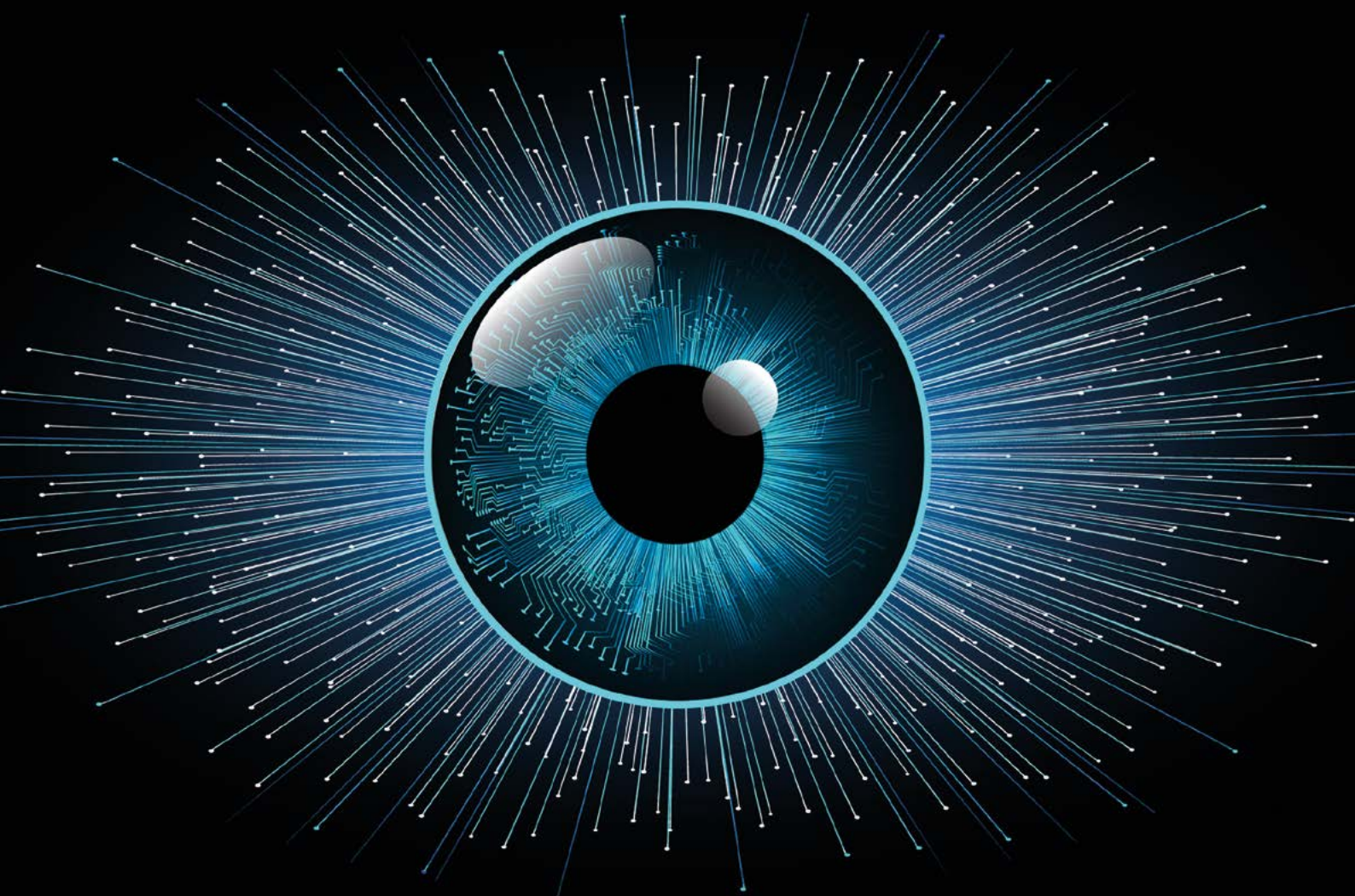




INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
of OPHTHALMOLOGY

2023 Annual Report



Bringing Together Ophthalmology Societies from All Over the World

Dear Colleagues, Partners and Friends,

In a time of unparalleled advancements in healthcare and scientific innovation, the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) enthusiastically collaborates with its members and partners to share knowledge and champion excellence in eye care. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the ophthalmology community and its allies for their unwavering dedication to expanding access to comprehensive eye care for all who need it.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization, the ICO remains steadfast in supporting and promoting the latest advancements in the global eye care agenda. Recent resolutions and targets set by the United Nations and World Health Assembly align perfectly with our collective efforts towards achieving universal eye health. As our ICO family grows, so do our endeavours to create a world where no one suffers from avoidable vision loss.

For 95 years, the ICO has proudly served the global ophthalmology community, supporting eye care professionals at every stage of their careers. Our commitment is evident through almost 30 years of ICO examinations and 25 years of the ICO Fellowship Program. As we prepare for the World Ophthalmology Congress 2024 in Vancouver, we are honoured to organize this global gathering, which serves as a premier platform for learning, sharing experiences, and fostering new collaborations. This event will bring together experts and colleagues from around the world to inspire and innovate.

Our shared achievements are a testament to the contributions of everyone involved in our mission. As we approach our centenary anniversary, we continue to build on the ICO's rich legacy of striving for excellence in eye care and connecting ophthalmologists and their teams with stakeholders and partners.

On behalf of the ICO's Board of Trustees and staff, we thank you for your unwavering support of the International Council of Ophthalmology and look forward to warmly welcoming you to the World Ophthalmology Congress 2024.



**Neeru Gupta, MD, PhD, MBA,
FRCSC, DABO, FARVO, FCAHS**
ICO President



Ivo Kocur, MD, MA, MSc, MBA
ICO Chief Executive Officer

ICO Highlights

In 2024, together, we have formed a “World Alliance for Sight” and supported the growth and development of ophthalmologists at every stage of their career through enhanced education and professional training, thereby enables the delivery of high-quality eye care and enhances global efforts to preserve and restore vision for everyone

- Serving more than **180 national, regional, and subspecialty Member Societies** from all over the world.
- Welcoming four new ICO Member Societies: the **Indian Pediatric Glaucoma Society (IPGS)**, **Italian Association of Ophthalmologists (AIMO)**, **Italian Society of Ophthalmological Sciences (SISO)**, and the **International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR)**.
- More than **59,000 ophthalmologists from 84 countries have taken the ICO Examinations** to meet the requirements to practice in their countries.
- More than **1,230 young ophthalmologists have been awarded an ICO Fellowship** at a renowned eye-care institution to gain valuable subspecialty knowledge and improve their practical skills.
- Expanding the **resources on the ICO Website** to include access to ICO Member Society academic journals and cutting-edge educational sessions on a range of topics.
- The ICO remains in **Official Relation status** with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Vision & Mission

Our ICO Vision

A world in which no one has avoidable vision loss, resulting from the shared commitment of ophthalmology societies, individual ophthalmologists, and those who work with them.

Our ICO Mission

The International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) works with the world’s ophthalmology societies and other stakeholders to enhance ophthalmic education and improve access to the highest quality eye care to preserve and restore vision for the people of the world.

ICO Strategic Priorities

The ICO's strategic aims are designed to assist the ophthalmology community in incorporating the present global eye health agenda into their daily work and societal activities.

Despite significant advances in eye disease detection and management, as well as ophthalmic research and technologies, the WHO World Report on Vision identifies some unfinished goals. The triple aim of priorities responds to immediate global eye care needs while also addressing projected worldwide eye disease trends as the world's population grows and the international ophthalmology community faces increased demand.

Three strategic priority areas

Through integrated education, engaged membership, and enhanced global advocacy, this strategic plan framework guides and highlights the ICO's mission.

Integrated Education

– promote continuous learning and skill-sharing, and provide standardized knowledge evaluation for ophthalmologists around the world.

Engaged Membership

– expand the global ophthalmology community through improving opportunities to network and access to professional development.



Advocacy

– encourage the formation of health systems and an environment that enhances eye health.

Download the ICO 2021–2024 ICO Strategic Plan [here](#)
or visit our website at icoph.org

Introducing New ICO Members



President of the Italian Society of Ophthalmological Sciences (SISO), Professor Teresio Avitabile, MD, Full Professor of Visual Diseases and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Catania, Italy

The Italian Society of Ophthalmological Sciences (SISO) was formed in 2021 and representing nearly 900 members, SISO promotes scientific excellence fosters ongoing solidarity among Italian ophthalmologists. The SISO hosted its 2nd National Congress in Rome dedicated to responding to pressing eye-care challenges. With a focus on advanced research and innovative interventions, the event featured a robust programme of more than 600 speakers and various symposia, poster presentations, wet labs, and subspecialty days.



President of the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR), Dr Vijaya K. Gothwal, MD, Head of Outcomes Research Unit at the LV Prasad Eye Institute and Senior Faculty, Bausch & Lomb School of Optometry, Hyderabad, India

The International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR) represents and connects professionals from a wide range of disciplines who are dedicated to innovation and development in the fields of low vision and rehabilitation of people with low vision, including ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, and more. The ISLRR leads scientific research and advancement in low vision and rehabilitation by promoting international and multidisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange to enhance vision and the delivery of eye care. In 2023 the ISLRR hosted the 14th International Conference on Low Vision Rehabilitation with the theme, "Low Vision Rehabilitation Across the Life Span" and featured a range of keynotes, paper presentations, and symposia on the latest within the field for infants and toddlers to adults and seniors, with a special focus on vision and the brain.



*President of the Italian Association of Ophthalmologists (AIMO),
Dr. Alessandra Balestrazzi,
Head of the Cornea Service UOC
Ophthalmology ASL Roma 2, Italy.*

The Italian Association of Ophthalmologists (AIMO) represents over 1700 members and provides clinical and regulatory updates, continuing medical education, and a wide range of information and news that provide ophthalmologists with up to date on the latest developments in eye care. Together with AIMO partners the Association provides clinical guidelines, supports ophthalmologists in managing clinical consents, recognizes excellence in ophthalmology through the distribution of AIMO awards and raises public awareness of eye health. In 2023 the Italian Society of Ophthalmological Sciences hosted its 14th National Congress.



*President of the Indian Paediatric Glaucoma Society (IPGS)
Prof. Viney Gupta, Dr R.P
Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences,
New Delhi, India*

The Indian Pediatric Glaucoma Society (IPGS) works to enhance the care and management of childhood glaucoma across India. The society was established to increase awareness of the causes and management of childhood glaucoma, promote research, and share research results in childhood glaucoma, assist parents of children diagnosed with glaucoma and provide training and support for healthcare professionals specializing in pediatric glaucoma.

ICO Symposia at Our Partners Events



*ICO Symposium speakers
at the 2023 European Society
of Ophthalmology (SOE) meeting*

From left to right:

Prof. Ke Yao, MD

Prof Tetsuro Oshika, MD, PhD

Prof. Ingrida Janulevičienė, MD, PhD

*Prof. Sundaram Natarajan, MBBS, DO,
FRVS, MABMS, MORCE, FABMS*

Dr. Ivo Kocur, MD, MA, MSc, MBA

In 2023 the ICO in collaboration with its partners convened its symposia at the major regional meetings of the **Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO)**, **European Society of Ophthalmology (SOE)** and **Middle East African Council of Ophthalmology (MEACO)**. Along with scientific sessions offering contributions of the international ophthalmology leaders, the ICO presented its activities and services to the ophthalmology community in various regions and assisted the delegates with detailed information on the educational opportunities and resources offered.



2023 ICO Mark Tso Golden Apple Awards

The ICO is proud to recognize leaders from the international ophthalmology community with ICO Awards & Medals. The Mark Tso Golden Apple Award is presented to an ophthalmologist completing outstanding work in regional training who is recognized for innovation and leadership in ophthalmic education within each of the four supranational regions. Prof. Mark Tso was the ICO Vice President during 1998–2006 and served as Director of Education until 2012. His dedication to ophthalmic education is honored through this award.



Prof. Amel Meddeb Ouertani
from Tunisia

The recipient of the Mark Tso Golden Apple Award for the Middle East – Africa Region



Prof. A.H.M. Enayet Hussain
from Bangladesh

The recipient of the Mark Tso Golden Apple Award for the Asia – Pacific Region

The International Council of Ophthalmology is proud to recognize these leaders in international ophthalmology who were nominated by their peers and selected the ICO to receive these well-deserved honors. Learn more about ICO Awards & Medals [here](#) or visit our website at icoph.org

Supporting the Global Eye Care Agenda

World Health Organization (WHO) SPECS 2030 initiative

From May 11–12, 2023 the World Health Organization (WHO) held an expert consultation to prepare a global initiative aimed at addressing the critical gap in eye-care services, including the shortage of spectacles in countries around the world. The ICO is in official relations with the World Health Organization and was honoured to participate in the consultation to provide wholly support for the WHO in its timely efforts to address uncorrected refractive errors.

Uncorrected refractive error, which can be fully corrected with the use of spectacles or contact lenses, is the leading cause of vision impairment in both children and adults. Globally, it is estimated that only 36% of people with a distance-vision impairment due to refractive error have access to an appropriate pair of spectacles, while more than 800 million people have a near-vision impairment that could be addressed with a pair of reading spectacles.

This global initiative aligns with the 2021 World Health Assembly endorsement of a 40% increase in effective coverage of refractive error by 2030, and the WHO is working toward providing a platform for relevant stakeholders to promote united action and coordinated advocacy towards the achievement of this global target.



The ICO is proud to promote the WHO's long-standing commitment to integrate eye care into universal health care and support countries in integrating people-centered eye-care services into their national health systems. We continue to advocate for our valued members and the world's ophthalmologists on the international stage. The ICO supports the development of the WHO Global Report on Vision and accompanying tools and documents in the frame of the Eye Care in Health Systems: Guide for Action provide guidance for developing comprehensive equitable eye care services worldwide.

Keeping Ophthalmologists Connected

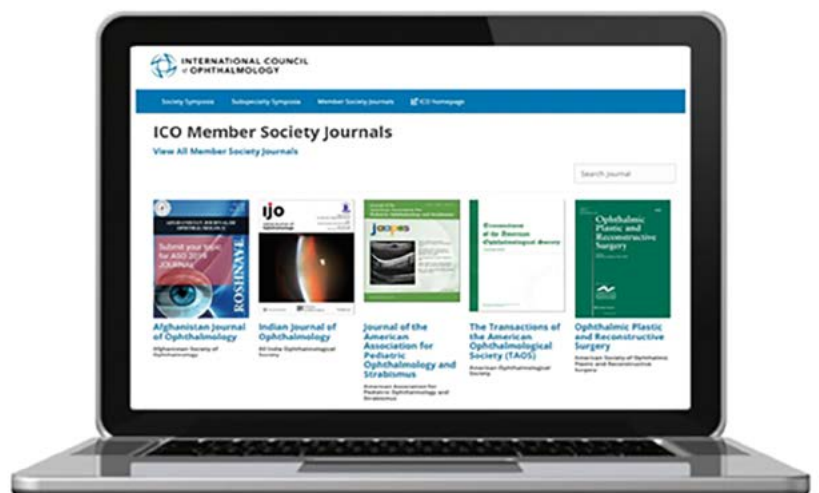


ICO WEBSITE

The ICO website is our interface with our global community. We aim to provide a streamlined user experience with enhanced navigation and search function that allows visitors to quickly find the educational and clinical resources they need. It is tailored to share the latest on the society meetings and activities as well as to provide updates on ICO programs and resources for educational programs, teaching and important international ophthalmology events.

ICO PORTAL

The ICO Portal provides users with an overview of academic journals from ophthalmology societies to enhance knowledge sharing and awareness of the available resources. The main ophthalmology journals are presented on one easy-to-navigate platform, it allows free access, or through society membership and institutional permissions.



NEWSLETTER *ICO Connections*

To further information sharing, collaboration, and networking among the global ophthalmology community, the ICO periodically issues its newsletter. The ICO thanks its members and partners for providing updates about their societies and activities to enable the ICO to share with the latest developments with the global ophthalmology community and beyond.

[Register Now for the 2022 World Ophthalmology Congress® \(WOC2022®\)](#)



[ICO Symposium at the European Society of Ophthalmology's SOE 2023 Congress](#)



[Next Sitting of ICO Examinations: October 31st, 2022](#)



Informing about ICO Activities

Connecting the Global Ophthalmology Community



[Watch the WHO Shortlisted Films on Vision and Eye Care](#)



[WHO Routine Health Information Systems – Sensory Functions Toolkit](#)



[Eye Care Embedded in New WHO Neonatal Care Guidelines](#)



Sharing the latest from ophthalmology societies in ICO Member Society Spotlights

Subscribe to receive *ICO Connections* [here](#) or on the ICO Website at icoph.org

Enhancing Ophthalmic Education



The online registration system for ICO Examinations streamlines the process

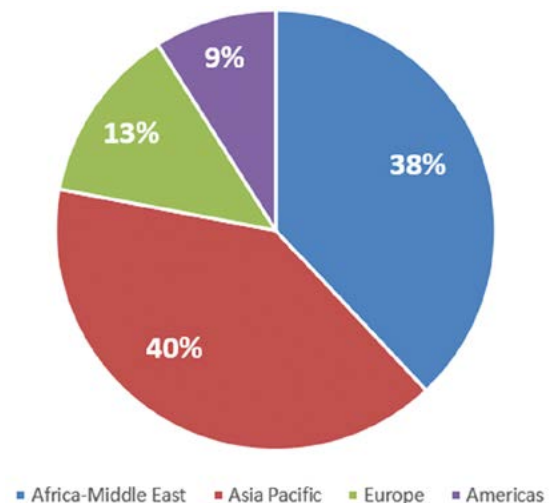


Since their establishment 28 years ago, more than 59,000 candidates have written the ICO Examinations at more than 120 testing centers around the world. The ICO is grateful to all the ICO Examinations coordinators for their ongoing support and to all candidates who sat the examinations in 2023 for their continued dedication to raising the standard of ophthalmology around the world.

ICO EXAMINATIONS

As the only global provider of ophthalmology examinations, the ICO continues to provide ophthalmologists from around the world with a structured pathway to evaluate their knowledge and meet the necessary requirements to practice in their home countries.

Passing the ICO Advanced Examination, along with a local face-to-face ophthalmology examination, entitles the successful candidate to use the prestigious post-nominal acronym FICO (Fellow of the International Council of Ophthalmology).



ICO Examination Candidates by Region

Learn more about the ICO Examinations [here](#) or visit our website at icoph.org

Empowering the Next Generation

ICO FELLOWSHIPS

ICO Fellowship Program has, to date, provided over 1,250 young ophthalmologists, primarily from settings with limited resources, with opportunities to enhance their subspecialty knowledge and practical skills through training programs at top eye care institutions around the globe. The candidates apply for ICO Fellowships through a new digital system that has streamlined the application process. Following their rigorous placements, fellows return to their home countries equipped and ready to contribute to enhancing eye care delivery.

ICO is grateful to all the institutions and supervisors who hosted ICO Fellows in 2023. We also thank all the generous donors whose contributions continue to make the ICO Fellowship.

Dr. Nevien Abdelkader from Egypt speaks about her ICO Fellowship in cornea and external diseases



Photo caption (from left to right): Professor Samer Hamada, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Queen Victoria Hospital with ICO Fellow, Dr. Nevien Abdelkader.

Under the supervision of Prof. Samer Hamada at Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, UK, Dr. Nevien Abdelkader from Egypt gained specialized knowledge and practical skills in cornea and external diseases.

"I finished my three-month ICO Fellowship at Queen Victoria Hospital, and it was an amazing experience full of knowledge and growth in all aspects. I have learned a lot generally in ophthalmology and in medical practice, and specifically in cornea which is my passion. Apart from clinical cases and medical knowledge, I also got to learn patient-doctor relationship ethics, how to include the patient in understanding their condition, how to point out the steps of surgeries and the complications that may occur while also providing the patient with psychological support, and delivering the message to the patients that we want the best benefit and outcome for them. The hospital became like a second home to me. I finished with a lot of changes in my mindset and determination to excel in my profession, including continuing my ICO Examinations in order to have the GMC registration. This whole experience has been one of the biggest milestones in my career. I am forever grateful that the ICO gave me this chance and my promise remains that I'll put all my efforts to implement what I learned everywhere I get to work."

Dr. Sukriti Gupta from India reflects on her ICO Fellowship learnings in retinal diseases.



*Photo caption
(from left to right):
Professor Saurabh Jain,
Consultant Ophthalmic
Surgeon, Royal Free
Hospital with ICO Fellow,
Dr. Sukriti Gupta.*

Sukriti Gupta from India gained specialized knowledge and practical skills in medical retina under the supervision of Professor Saurabh Jain at the Royal Free Hospital in London, UK. Thank you to Santen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. for their generous support of this ICO Fellowship.

"The opportunity to participate in an ICO Fellowship at the prestigious Royal Free Hospital in London has been a dream come true for me. The experience has really enhanced my clinical knowledge and practical skills in management of patients with various retinal diseases, like diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive retinopathy, ARMD, and various congenital retinal diseases. Each day I learned something new and achieved my goal of learning about approaches to various retinal diseases, different treatment guidelines, and new technologies in the diagnosis and treatment of retinal diseases which would not have been possible in my country. This experience will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on my career and enable me to contribute more effectively to the advancement of ophthalmology in my home country.

This opportunity has not only empowered me professionally but has also instilled in me a renewed sense of responsibility towards serving my patients and improving eye care in underserved communities. I am determined to utilise the knowledge and skills acquired during this Fellowship to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need."

Dr Purnima Rajkarnikar Sthapit from Nepal shares how her ICO Fellowship helped her to expand eye care services in Nepal.



Photo caption ICO Fellow, Dr. Purnima Rajkarnikar Sthapit (center), Prof. Carol Shields, Chief of Ocular Oncology at Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, USA (right), and Prof. Sarah Lally (left).

Sukriti Gupta from Nepal gained specialized knowledge and practical skills in medical retina under the supervision of Prof. Carol Shields, Chief of Ocular Oncology at Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, USA. Dr Purnima Rajkarnikar Sthapit currently spearheads oculoplastic and eye oncology subspecialty services in Nepal at the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology. She is also the Founder and Chair of Open Eyes Nepal – Together for Retinoblastoma.

"I would like to thank the ICO for giving me an opportunity to do my oculoplastics fellowship training. Prof C Hintschich at LMU Munich opened my eyes to the various aspects of oculoplastics. He even visited me two years later where we did combined surgery at my center in Nepal. I joined him again the following year to attend the Orbital Symposium at Munich where I was also provided with the travel grant. I could continue with my ICO fellowship in ocular oncology at the prestigious Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia with Prof. Shields and Prof. Lally where I learned about the most advanced treatment of various ocular cancers. Since then, I have been actively doing oculoplastic surgeries as well as treating patients with eye cancers in Nepal and recently also became Head of the Department of Oculoplastics, Ocular Oncology and Prosthesis at the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology in Kathmandu, Nepal."

Learn more about the ICO Fellowships [here](#) or visit our website at icoph.org

Integrating Education for Students and Teachers

The ICO's Educational Programs are designed to support ophthalmologists at every stage of their careers, thereby ensuring they are best equipped to deliver high-quality eye care in clinical settings around the world. Both students and educators benefit from a wide range of resources that facilitate best-practice learning, including curricula, teaching guides, and clinical guidelines. We also work to address both current and anticipated shortfalls of ophthalmologists—particularly in low-resource countries—by supporting specialized training and skills development of eye-care teams led by ophthalmologists.

ICO Curricula

All ICO Curricula are designed to be adapted and modified to meet local and regional needs. The following curricula are available in multiple languages:

- [ICO Residency Curriculum](#)
- [ICO Ophthalmic Educators Curriculum](#)
- [Cornea, External Diseases, and Refractive Surgery](#)
- [Glaucoma](#)
- [Neuro-Ophthalmology](#)
- [Ophthalmic and Facial Plastic Surgery](#)
- [Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus](#)

Global Covid-19 Resources and Clinical Guidelines

The [ICO Global COVID-19 Resource Centre](#) provided COVID-19 related guidelines, resources, and information recommended by ICO Member societies from around the world.

[International Clinical Guidelines](#) are prepared to serve a supportive and educational role for ophthalmologists worldwide and are intended to improve the quality of eye care for patients.



The ICO Ophthalmology Surgical Competency Assessment Rubric (ICO-OSCAR) is a standardized, internationally valid tool evaluators can use to assess residents' competence in performing specific surgical procedures. This behavioral and skills-based rubric also provides residents a tool to better gauge their skills and identify areas for improvement.

[ICO-OSCARs](#) are available in multiple languages and for various surgical procedures.

**Save the date
for the 2024 World Ophthalmology Congress®
(WOC2024®) taking place in Vancouver,
Canada from August 16th to 19th, 2024.**



Organized by the ICO, WOC2024® will once again bring together the world ophthalmology community for a uniquely immersive learning experience designed to shape the future of sight.

Featuring state-of-the-art scientific sessions, unparalleled member society symposia, and the latest industry presentations, WOC2024® will provide exclusive and cutting-edge learning opportunities for participants to network, share insights, and exchange knowledge across general ophthalmology and all subspecialty areas.

With ophthalmology society leaders and members from around the world, there will be ample opportunities for clinicians, researchers, and industry colleagues to engage and learn from one another to stimulate best eye care practices.

**We look forward to seeing you in Vancouver
at the World Ophthalmology Congress 2024.**

Follow us on: <https://icowoc.org/>

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