# International Ophthalmology Experience

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<tr>
<th>Trainee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td>Saul Rajak</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications held</strong></td>
<td>PhD, FRCOphth</td>
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<td><strong>Deanery with which the OOPE was undertaken (if trainee retained NTN during OOPE)</strong></td>
<td>South Thames</td>
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<td><strong>How many years experience in clinical ophthalmology did you have prior to undertaking your OOPE?</strong></td>
<td>3 years SHO/equivalent and 1 year registrar (on training rotation)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Email address</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:SaulRajak@lshtm.ac.uk">SaulRajak@lshtm.ac.uk</a></td>
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## Details of Visit

| **Dates of OOPE** | May 2007 – Dec 2010 |
| **Duration** | 3.5 years |
| **Place of Fellowship/Research Project (please list if more than one institution)** | Research done through International Centre of Eye Health (at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) Based in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia |
| **Title of Fellowship/Research Project (please specify if multiple projects)** | 1) Strategies for the Management of Trachomatous Trichiasis (PhD thesis title) 2) Trachomatous trichiasis surgical training DVD 3) Several other research studies |
| **UK organizing institution (if relevant)** | ICEH, LSHTM |
| **International hosting institution (if relevant)** | Carter Center Atlanta/Ethiopia |

## Financial Assistance

| **Did the OOPE attract a salary** | Yes – UK lecturers’ salary |
| **Was a UK salary retained?** | Returned to training at same stage of salary scale |
| **Grants/ fellowships obtained** | Project and salary funded by a Band Aid grant. |

## Outcome of OOPE

<p>| <strong>Development of clinical skills (including surgical skills: include surgical numbers if relevant)</strong> | No clinical work during OOPE except clinical examinations of patients with trachoma for research trials |</p>
<table>
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<th>Degree awarded (if relevant)</th>
<th>PhD</th>
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<th>Publications (or papers in preparation)</th>
<th>Epilation for minor trachomatous trichiasis: four-year results of a randomised controlled trial. Accepted for publication</th>
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**The outcome of trachomatous trichiasis surgery in Ethiopia: risk factors for recurrence**


**Post-Operative Recurrent Trachomatous Trichiasis Is Associated with Increased Conjunctival Expression of S100A7 (Psoriasin)**


PLoS NTD 6(12) e1985

**Why do people not attend for treatment of trachomatous trichiasis in Ethiopia? A study of barriers to surgery**

*S.N.Rajak, E.Habtamu, H.A.Weiss, A.B.Kello, M Zerihun, T.Gebre, C.E.Gilbert, P.M.Emerson and M.J.Burton*

PLoS NTD, 2012, 6(8), e1766

**New DVD supports trachoma surgery training**

*S.N.Rajak, A.Bedri, M.J.Burton*


**Absorbable versus silk sutures for surgical treatment of trachomatous trichiasis in Ethiopia: A randomised controlled trial**


PLoS Medicine, 2011;8(12):e1001137

**Surgery versus epilation for the treatment of minor trichiasis in Ethiopia: a randomised controlled non-inferiority trial**


PLoS Medicine, 2011;8(12):e1001136

**Trachomatous trichiasis and its management in endemic countries**

*S.N.Rajak, J.R.O.C.Collin, M.J.Burton*


**Epilation for trachomatous trichiasis and the risk of corneal opacification?**

*S.N.Rajak, E.Habtamu, H.A.Weiss, A.Bedri, T.Gebre, A.Genet,*
The clinical phenotype of trachomatous trichiasis in Ethiopia: not all trichiasis is due to entropion


Clearing the backlog: trichiasis surgeon retention and productivity in Northern Ethiopia

E. Habtamu, S. N. Rajak, T. Gebre, M. Zerihun, A. Genet, P. M. Emerson and M. J. Burton

PLOS NTD. 2011;5(4):e1014

The conjunctival transcriptome in scarring trachoma.


Infection and Immunity 2011;79(1):499-511

Other key outcomes (individuals trained, services developed etc.)

During the course of the research:
1) Approximately 5000 trachomatous trichiasis lid surgeries done.
2) Trachoma surgery DVD produced

Nature and purpose of OOPE:

1. What (or who) inspired you to undertake an International OOPE?
   - Did a short stint (3 months) of ophthalmology observership in Uganda with Dr Keith Waddell.

2. Was it difficult to organize? What were the barriers, and how did you overcome these?
   - You have to be persistent and start planning a couple of years in advance
   - Happy to live in the Developing World with a family.

3. Did you have any dependents at the time of the OOPE? Did you take them with you? Was it difficult to make arrangements for them, if so?
   - Wife and baby daughter with me in Ethiopia.
   - No health problems.
   - Challenging but ultimately wonderful family experience

4. Did you feel safe throughout your OOPE?
   - Yes, very.
5. What do you feel is the impact of your OOPE experience on your clinical progress/development towards CCT?

- Slower to reach CCT
- Gained an enormous amount of experience
- No concerns re not doing surgery – fine to get back to phaco/other surgery after the three year break.

6. If working in a clinical context, did you feel prepared? Were you supported if you required help?

- Not applicable

7. Do you intend to continue participating in international ophthalmology? If so, in what context?

- Yes, some involvement in continued trachoma research and involvement in expert committees in trachoma surgery.

8. Will you return to the hosting institution? Are you able to provide any assistance remotely?

- Have an honorary lecturer position at ICEH/LSHTM and involved in some projects there.

9. What was the most worthwhile part of your international OOPE?

1) Being in charge of and responsible for my project/research and running a team to do the project
2) Family experience of living in Africa.
3) Career avenues that have opened up as a result.

10. Would you have done anything differently, if you were undertaking the same OOPE again?

- No