

Citation for the award of Honorary Fellowship of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

Professor Usha Chakravarthy, presented by Andrew Dick

I am a very proud and honoured colleague to provide this citation for Professor Usha Chakravarthy's Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Usha, if I may be so informal, is currently Professor of Ophthalmology at Institute of Ophthalmology and Vision Science at Queen's University Belfast, incorporated I believe now as the Institute of Health Sciences and is also part of the Centre for Public Health in Belfast.

Professor Chakravarthy is an eminent UK ophthalmologist with a gargantuan international reputation. Usha has led or has been a key co-investigator in many of the major international clinical trials with therapeutics, including the IVAN, INTREPID, EUREYE, INDEYE, and VISION studies. She is co-author of multiple Cochrane Review articles, plus the inaugural Royal College of Ophthalmologists guidelines for the treatment of AMD. The depth and expanse of her research is illustrated early in her career with seminal laboratory seminal works on retinal microvasculature biology, beta-irradiation prior to moving into clinical research with teletherapy for AMD. By the mid-90s Usha had developed her standing and created her opportunity to progress; translating therapies into trials for diabetic retinopathy and AMD. The rest as they say, is history, although the impact of her work continues to evolve.

There are many case studies of Usha to choose but to me the IVAN study expresses all about Usha. This trial - Ranibizumab versus bevacizumab to treat neovascular age-related macular degeneration: one-year findings from the IVAN randomized trial was and remains a formative and influential trial. The trial was not for the faint hearted and Usha's lead and drive was evident throughout. The trial sponsored by NIHR was against a political and commercial tide to provide evidence as to whether a non-licensed anti-VEGF therapy was as efficacious as the licensed product. The trial engaged multiple centres throughout UK, engaged local commissioners, NHSE and of course enormous interest from the press. In addition to the academic value and quality of and veracity of data from this well constructed and performed trial, the resulting impact was enormous. It led to discussions at government level as to a potential change in policy for licencing drugs, it galvanised this college in a voice for our patients and their choice and it built the professional *retinal* network for trials and patient-public engagement and involvement we all benefit from and enjoy today. Archetypical of visionaries, this trial expressed Usha qualities: excellent academic work; robust and resilient in execution and a distinct clarity in discussion. Her determination, calmness and precision are very prominent in her academic quest for the truth to provide the evidence for patient benefit.

Usha continues to work at the forefront of AMD research, investigating issues such as the long-term effectiveness of anti-VEGF regimens, and the factors that affect patients' response to anti-VEGF therapy.

More about the wider career of Professor Chakravarthy. The impact of her work is unquestionable. Usha has led many national and international clinical trials that have generated the evidence base to change practice and policy worldwide. She encompasses the full tenet of a clinician scientist through her integration of research and education to deliver excellent training of future clinician scientist and NHS Clinicians, improvement and development of patient care particularly in the areas of retinal diseases, AMD and diabetic retinopathy. Her *research* has generated over 400 publications in peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters in retina. Her work and advances made have been supported by over £25M in grant awards.

Through *teaching and education*, she has been active in local, national and international (China, India, South East Asia Singapore, Africa and Australia) activities. At the *College*, she has been an active supporter and contributor to a number of college activities including Part 1, and Fellowship examinations and Exit examinations from 1998 to 2012. Her *citizenship* roles for the college have also included being a scientific committee member, regular speaker and organiser at College meetings, annual congress and seminars.

With respect to *Health Care development*, Usha has developed the evidence base to make commissioning and policy changes and improvements in patient care, both locally, nationally and internationally. Consequently, she has been a recipient, and in recognition of her excellence, of many *Awards*. This includes: Local university and Trust achievement and staff excellence awards; Aravind Eye Care award; Gass and Henkind medals from Macula Society USA.; life time award from American Academy and is a Gold Fellow of ARVO. Additionally, she has given several eponymous lectures including most recently the prestigious Bowman 2018 lecture at Royal College of Ophthalmologists annual congress.

In summary, Usha manifests the qualities of a clinician scientist committed to patient benefit and societal gain. In recognition, further to those awards mentioned above, others include the Alan Alderman award from the Macular Disease Society UK, and the very prestigious **Commander of the most excellent order of the British Empire** from her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for her services to Ophthalmology and voluntary service to managing eye condition. Taken together, all her awards signify her enormous and impactful contributions over many years.

On a personal note whenever I have had the opportunity to work with Usha, it has been a privilege. She extends her warm personable nature and humility to all her collaborators and we all learn when working with her.

I wholeheartedly commend Professor Chakravarthy to the college to bestow the honour of an Honorary Fellowship.