Dear Colleagues and Alumni,

We extend our warmest invitation to you to visit the School this December for the final School Alumni Continuing Education event for the year.

We are very excited about our speakers for the evening. Our very own Alumna, Dr Nicole Carnt, and Clinical Professor Stephanie Watson, a distinguished ophthalmologist and researcher, will speak on the topic of ocular stem cell dysfunction and the maintenance of a healthy ocular surface. We hope you will take this opportunity to learn about this fascinating condition while taking some time out to socialise with your colleagues and the staff and students of the School.

Dr Isabelle Jalbert  
Acting-Head, School of Optometry and Vision Science

When: Tuesday, 1st December 2015

Where: School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of New South Wales, Kensington Campus (enter Gate 14, Barker Street)

Schedule:
- 5:30-6.15 pm: Registration / Refreshments - UNSW Optometry Clinic
- 6.15-6.20 pm: Official Welcome and Address  
  Dr Isabelle Jalbert  
  Acting Head, School of Optometry and Vision Science, UNSW
- 6.20-7.20 pm: Presentation by Clinical Professor Watson and Dr. Nicole Carnt  
  Limbal Stem Cell Deficiency and Repair: Where are we?
- 7.20-7.30 pm: Questions
- 7.30 pm: Close

Cost: None to attendees, hosted by the School

RSVP: by Wednesday 25th November, 2015 to optomalumni@unsw.edu.au
Enquiries may be directed to (02) 9385 5287.

CPD points applied for: 2
More about the speakers:

Clinical Professor Stephanie Watson

Bsc(Med), MMBS, FRANZCO, PhD

Clinical Professor Stephanie Watson is an ophthalmic surgeon specialising in cataract, corneal and laser surgery; with expertise in eye disease in adults and children. She provides personalised care to each individual patient, making considered diagnoses and tailoring surgical and management options to each patient's circumstances.

Professor Watson is a specialist in corneal and cataract surgery at the Sydney Eye Hospital, Sydney Children's and Prince of Wales Hospital, and St Vincent's Private Hospital. She completed subspeciality training at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London and was awarded a PhD for the development of a new dry eye therapy. She is a Clinical Professor in the Sydney University Medical School, a conjoint senior lecturer at the University of New South Wales, a Director of the Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia and Editor for the Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group.

Prof Watson is known for her ground-breaking research in stem cell treatment for corneas. Her work has been featured on ABC's New Inventors and Catalyst, and in the New York Times and Qantas magazine. She leads a research program focused on innovative solutions for ocular surface disease and corneal surgery. She has published over 88 articles in high-ranked peer reviewed journals and book chapters, and holds international patents. Professor Watson has given over 100 presentations at national and international meetings.
Dr. Nicole Carnt

BOptom, PhD, FBCLA, FAAO

Nicole Carnt graduated from University of NSW in Optometry in 1989 and worked in private practice for 10 years before taking a position with the Brien Holden Vision Institute in 1999, where she held a variety of roles, including Principal Investigator on contact lens clinical trials.

She completed a PhD on Epidemiology of Contact Lens Related Infection and Inflammation 2008-12, while working part time as a project manager at the UNSW and was granted several research awards including two American Optometric Foundation Ezell Fellowships, the British Contact Lens Association Dallos Award 2010 and 2015 and the American Optometric Foundation Vistakon Research award 2011.

Nicole became a National Health and Medical Research Centre CJ Martin Biomedical Early Career Fellow at Save Sight Institute, University of Sydney in 2012 and spent the first 2.5 years at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, Europe’s largest tertiary eye hospital. Now back at Save Sight Institute, she is part of Clin Prof Watson’s Ocular Repair Group and is also affiliated with University College London and University of NSW. Her areas of research include the genetic susceptibility to cornea infection, anterior eye disease immunology, microbiology, epidemiology and patient involvement in research.
More about the topic:

Abstract

Limbal Stem Cell Deficiency and Repair: Where are we?

Clin. Prof. Stephanie Watson, Dr. Nicole Carnt,
Ocular Repair Group, Save Sight Institute, University of Sydney

Stem cells are the bodies ‘building blocks’; they maintain and repair damaged tissue by dividing to form new cells. The stem cells that regenerate the cornea are found at the limbus within the intricate architecture of the Palisades of Vogt. In limbal stem cell dysfunction, the corneal epithelium is unstable, resulting in recurrent erosions and persistent epithelium defects. Eventually the conjunctival epithelium traverses the limbus, with loss of vision.

Limbal stem cell dysfunction is traditionally diagnosed by clinical signs and impression cytology. Novel imaging techniques are now able to detect limbal changes and add to the diagnosis and knowledge of the mechanisms of this disease. Most often the cause is an external catastrophic event such as a chemical splash, but chronic damage such as dry eye and contact lens wear can also result in limbal stem cell failure. In early limbal stem cell failure, the emphasis is on ensuring the ocular surface environment is optimised to protect and preserve function. In late disease, limbal stem cell transplantation is viable, the furthest along the regulatory pipeline for ocular disease.

In these presentations, Clin. Prof. Watson and Dr Carnt will detail the risk factors, mechanisms and diagnosis of limbal stem cell deficiency. Dr Carnt will set this within the scope of optometric practice as early detection is key for better outcomes. The range of treatments including the latest limbal stem cell transplantation techniques will be highlighted through the experience of Clin. Prof. Watson, a pioneer in these laboratory and surgical innovations.