



The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons & Lancet Commission on Global Surgery  
present the 4th triennial

## Global Health Symposium

Monday 26 October 2015, at RACS Headquarters, Melbourne



### 'STRENGTHENING SAFE SURGERY AND ANAESTHESIA IN THE ASIA PACIFIC'

Convened by Associate Professor Phillip Carson and Professor Russell Gruen  
and co-chaired with Professor John Meara, Chair of the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery

Over the last four years, the College has been collaborating with international surgical bodies and advocacy groups to promote safe surgical care and anaesthesia to the World Health Assembly as part of a primary health care package, integral to achieving universal health coverage. Significant progress has been made at the policy level, and it is critical that we continue to work with our neighbouring countries and partner institutions to overcome the many challenges and barriers to improving health systems and surgical services that are faced by clinicians, administrators and policy makers on the ground. We believe that the regional specialist colleges have a role to play in leading this initiative. The aim of the Global Health Symposium is to start this conversation.

The Program will focus on four key issues outlined in the recent Lancet Commission on Global Surgery report as being critical to achieving universal access to safe surgery and anaesthesia by 2030:

- Strengthening health systems
- Solving workforce issues
- Sustainable financing of health care systems
- Ensuring sufficient quality and safety

The Provisional Program and Registration Form are available on the RACS website:  
<http://www.surgeons.org/for-the-public/racs-global-health/symposium-international-forums/>

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Timorese Registrars with Sandra Staffieri (middle) and Dr Manoj Sharma (front, far right).

## A BRIGHTER BEGINNING

Melbourne Orthoptist Sandra Staffieri delivers the first paediatric ophthalmology training program in Timor-Leste

Ms Sandra Staffieri, Clinical and Research Orthoptist from the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, travelled to Timor-Leste in March to teach Trainees undertaking the Post Graduate Diploma of Ophthalmology (PGDO) in specialist skills in paediatric ophthalmology. The activity was funded by Lions Club International Foundation through the College-managed Lions SightFirst - East Timor Project and delivered in conjunction with the RACS Global Health's East Timor Eye Program (ETEP).

Currently, Timor-Leste has one national ophthalmologist for a population of 1.2 million people, and has relied heavily on international assistance to provide services and deliver training programs to enhance national capacity. ETEP has worked in Timor-Leste for over 14 years and aims to handover an autonomous, sustainable eye health system to the Government of Timor-Leste by 2020. The establishment and delivery of the PGDO to train and develop the Timorese health workforce is one such program designed to make this aim a reality.

Timor-Leste is a young nation with a bulging youth population – 50 per cent of the population is aged under the age of 18, and 20 per cent aged under 5 years (WHO 2012). Focusing on developing skills and knowledge of Timorese doctors and other eye health workers in paediatric ophthalmology is an important step in reducing the rates of preventable blindness in children.

Ms Staffieri highlighted the importance of establishing a paediatric ophthalmology service as part of the National Eye Centre in Timor-Leste.

"Children will be 'blind' for many more years than the adults will be, so it is only sensible and important that this group be included in specific screening programs, targeting potentially preventable blinding eye disease that can be avoided or minimised by early detection. Moreover, early identification of vision loss and impairment in children is paramount to enable the earliest possible access to low-vision services to maximise education and learning opportunities."

To begin the process of enhancing knowledge and skills in paediatric ophthalmology in Timor-Leste, Ms Staffieri worked alongside the PGDO Trainees at the National Eye Centre. Teaching and training activities included formal lectures in 'Paediatric Clinical Ophthalmic Examination and Skills', 'Diagnosis, Management and Treatment of Strabismus and

Amblyopia', 'Retinoblastoma – Current Management and Treatment' and 'Genetics 101'. Clinical exposure and supervision was also a key element of the training, which was done with the Trainees and other eye health workers at the daily Outpatients clinic at the NEC. This provided the Trainees with an opportunity to consolidate their formal learnings and for Ms Staffieri to provide her professional opinion and guidance on diagnosis, management and treatment of paediatric cases. As Ms Staffieri explained, "Clinical examination of children is a unique skill that is developed over time, and can only be improved with practise and experience."

The PGDO Trainees thoroughly enjoyed expanding their knowledge base to include paediatrics and working with Ms Staffieri, as highlighted by Dr Nico: "Now I can check visual acuity in children (by their age) and squint. Sandra really shows me how to do that" and Dr Julia: "We learnt how to use hundreds and thousands and other toys during eye examinations with children to keep them calm and focused (we practise on the patient)."

Ms Staffieri also delivered lectures to the Outreach Screening team on 'Paediatric Vision Assessment' to further strengthen the NEC's approach and knowledge in paediatric ophthalmology. She also extended the reach of her training to staff at Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares (HNGV), co-located at the NEC, by delivering a Grand Rounds on 'Blinding Paediatric Eye Disease'.

Ms Staffieri identified areas for growth at the NEC, including the implementation of an appointment system for patients requiring review, as there is currently no such system that places importance on review appointments.

