

## Synopsis

### FEOPh Symposium and Roundtable Discussion during the DOG Congress Berlin

**Moderators:** Philip Gass, Claus Cursiefen, Carl-Friedrich Arndt and Pier-Enrico Gallenga

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

The FEOPh symposium titled “**Surface in Flames – Management Strategies**” was a huge success and attracted both experts and young ophthalmologist speakers from across Europe. Motivated by such a “hot” topic, junior speakers from France, UK, Italy, Germany and Spain presented their findings on management of various challenging inflammatory anterior segment conditions. Supervised by their mentors, the talks impressed the participants with their high quality and important clinical and practical implications. The session was followed by a round table discussion from experts representing different European countries. The participants in the panel discussion were: Claus Cursiefen (*Cologne, Germany*), Serge Doan (*Paris, France*), Gaspare Monaco (*Milan, Italy*), and David Shahnazaryan (*London, UK*).

The junior presentations were as follows:

#### **1. Gilles Martin (*Paris, France*): New treatment options in Vernal Keratoconjunctivitis**

Dr Martin presented on new therapeutic approaches in the management of Vernal keratoconjunctivitis (VKC), a chronic atopic eye disease affecting young children with often challenging clinical course and severe complications if left untreated. Dr Martin reported the successful use of topical immunosuppressants such as ciclosporin as well as tacrolimus. It was interesting to know about availability of tacrolimus eyedrops, a more tolerable mode of administration in younger patients. The participants agreed that steroid sparing agents are an essential part of the management of VKC to reduce severe side effects of steroids such as cataract, glaucoma and infection. It was also agreed that good patient and parent education is paramount to improve treatment compliance and the outcomes in this chronic condition.

#### **2. Barbara Burgos-Blasco (*Madrid, Spain*): Topical insulin for refractory persistent corneal epithelial defects**

Dr Burgos-Blasco from Spain presented very promising results on the use of Insulin drops for the management of chronic non healing corneal ulcer. It was very interesting to hear about the successful use of this cheap and widely available drug in potentially sight threatening conditions. Although it had not been trialled by our roundtable experts and it was agreed that pre- and post-treatment assessment of corneal sensation was important to consider when evaluating its use. Potential role of corneal confocal scanning microscopy in evaluating the therapeutic effect of the treatment on corneal innervation has also been discussed.

**3. Mert Mestanoglu (Cologne, Germany): Fine needle diathermy and corneal crosslinking for regression of corneal neovascularisation before high-risk keratoplasty: pilot data**

Dr Mestanoglu reported on the results of fine-needle diathermy (FND) combined with the corneal collagen cross-linking (CXL) for the management of corneal neovascularisation – a condition that often presents a therapeutic challenge and can lead to high risk of corneal transplant rejection and failure. It was interesting to learn the results of the use of CXL on animal models showing significant regression of both blood and lymphatic vasculature after the UV treatment. The pilot study on human high-risk corneal transplant recipients showed significantly reduced rates of rejection due to regression of corneal NV. A number of treatment-related complications such as postoperative infections were reported, possibly due to delayed corneal epithelialisation. A delayed approach to corneal transplantation after the FND and CXL was therefore suggested to encourage corneal healing and reduce infection.

**4. Jasdeep Gill (London, UK): Anterior segment in systemic vasculitis**

Dr Gill presented the summary of a stepwise approach in the management of anterior segment complications of systemic vasculitis. The role of Levamisole-adulterated cocaine consumption in causing systemic vasculitis was also discussed, including a case study from London in which this involved a cicatricial conjunctivitis non-responsive to conventional treatment. This had not been encountered by the experts present from other countries. Dr Gill highlighted the important role of an Ophthalmologist in the correct diagnosis as well as the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach in the management of systemic vasculitis, a potentially life-threatening condition.

**5. Francesca Cappelli (Milan, Italy): The role of autologous serum eyedrops in the treatment of severe refractory dry eye disease in primary Sjogren Syndrome – a real life analysis**

Dr Cappelli presented very positive outcomes of their study into the use of the autologous serum drops (ASD) in patients with severe dry eyes in primary Sjogren Syndrome. The improvement in many of the ocular surface scores such as OSDI, corneal staining, Schirmer's score and patient reported quality of life as well as the safe treatment profile highlighted the important role of ASD as a powerful tool in the management of refractory dry eye disease. The roundtable discussion highlighted that the availability of the in-Hospital ASD preparation varied significantly in different European countries. The participants agreed that steps must be taken to improve patient access to such a valuable, well tolerated and safe treatment.

Due to its significant practical potential the talk on the use of topical insulin was awarded **the best presentation**. A consensus was reached among the panel participants to consider the use of insulin eye drops for the treatment of non-healing corneal ulcers in their local departments and report the outcomes during the future FEOph meetings.

(J. Gill, D. Shahnazaryan)