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Featuring Dr Salil Gadkari



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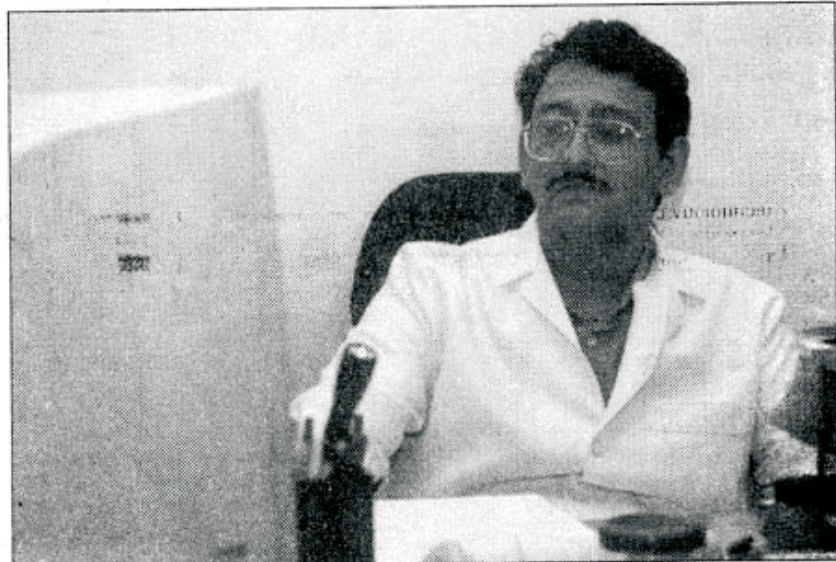
Looking at eye-care in a new light

Madhu Parthasarathy

WITH better nutrition and healthcare, the geriatric population is on the rise. Diseases such as diabetes which earlier took a heavy toll on lives before is a thing of the past. But with it come a whole host of other problems. The diabetic population suffers from loss of eyesight due to retinopathy, a condition which was not seen earlier due to the fact that few survived to have the condition. Now thanks to technology, it is possible to curb it to an extent and prevent the condition from causing blindness. Dr Salil S Gadkari MRC Ophth (UK) MS DOMS FCPS DNB is one such vitreo-retina surgeon and retinal laser specialist based in Pune. This super-speciality in the field of ophthalmology, deals with numerous potentially blinding diseases of the vitreous jelly and retina. Diabetic and hypertensive retinopathy, retinal detachment, intra-ocular infection and severe eye injuries account for the maximum number of he says cases. A combination of experience and cutting edge technology at Gadkari's eye centre, makes it possible to treat hitherto untreatable conditions.

He says, "Most of those who go for a regular eye check up go only to the optician who can only correct the power of the glasses that the person is wearing. The changes taking place inside the eye are not known. Most of the people are not aware that there is a way to reduce damage to eye sight, especially diabetics. Ideally the condition should be detected at an early stage to be treated. As soon as a person is diagnosed with diabetes an annual retinal check up should be done yearly by a vitreo-retinal surgeon or an eye specialist." He further explains, "it is possible for diabetics to not really experience any loss in eyesight and yet have advanced stages of retinopathy. When sudden loss of vision is detected they it is usually at a very late stage in the condition. At this point surgery may not be of very real help."

Dr Gadkari did his undergraduate and postgraduate medical training at Seth GS Medical college and KEM Hospital, Mumbai. He was the recipient of two gold medals during the course of his postgraduate medical training in Ophthalmology. He



went on to qualify from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, UK. He received his vitreo-retinal training in Germany from Claus Heimann, one of the students of the pioneers in the field of vitreo-retinal surgery nearly twenty years ago.

Dr Gadkari had wide and varied experience as the head of the Vitreo-retinal Unit, RamaKrishna Mission Hospital (the first fully equipped VR unit in a charitable hospital in Mumbai), from 1993 to 1998.

To date four of his surgical videos have been accepted at the annual congress of the Royal College of ophthalmologists, UK. This year his video was on 'Management of exudative retinal detachment in coat's disease', was screened at the annual conference of the Vitreous Society, USA in Cancun 2001. He says "these videos, which can be taken with help of the microscope during surgery, when viewed abroad changes the perception of the capabilities of Indians just as the professions in the IT sphere have changed the perceptions of Indians world over. He says they realise that the work that is being done in western

countries is also available in India and at a much much lower cost."

He has four publications and papers in international journals and conferences. He

has conducted an instruction course at the European Society of Ophthalmology conference in 1997, on diagnosis and management of Eales' disease. He has 13 papers at National and State conferences, and 9 publications in Indexed Indian journals. He is a recipient of the YKC Pandit prize and Bell Pharma award conferred by the Maharashtra Ophthalmological Society.

He says more awareness needs to be created about the precautions and treatment available. Very few are aware that such speciality exists. Out of about a thousand ophthalmologists in the profession in the state of Maharashtra, he estimates that there are only about 15 to 17 specialising in the field. As a result of which he from where he treats patients referred from the entire state, Pune being a more favoured destination than Bombay by patients. Here's to looking eye-care in a new light.

ASPIRING HIGH