Nystagmus Network Awards Legacy Grant for Groundbreaking Vision Research

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Sheffield researchers to study focusing ability in people with nystagmus through innovative new project

The Nystagmus Network has awarded a Legacy Grant to Dr Gemma Arblaster and Dr Sonia Toor, lecturers and researchers in Orthoptics at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, for their pioneering research into accommodation and focusing in nystagmus. This important study aims to enhance clinical understanding of how individuals with nystagmus focus on objects at varying distances.

The research project, made possible by a generous legacy gift from the late Mrs Rhoda Clarke, will examine the focusing ability of people with nystagmus - an area that has not been extensively studied before. Mrs Clarke, whose great niece has albinism and nystagmus, hoped her gift would benefit young people like her in the future.

Dr Arblaster says:

"We are delighted to have been awarded the research grant from the Nystagmus Network, which has been made possible following a generous donation from the late Mrs Rhoda Clarke.

‘Our research will measure accommodation or ‘focusing ability’. We are keen to better understand the focusing abilities of people with infantile nystagmus and people with albinism and nystagmus, compared to people without nystagmus. This study will allow us to develop recommendations on how best to measure focusing in nystagmus in a clinical setting. It will also allow us to study focusing in a research environment using specialised equipment and plan future research in this area."

The study will:

- recruit participants aged 16-36 with infantile nystagmus, albinism and nystagmus, as well as a control group without nystagmus

- utilise various clinical and research techniques to measure focusing ability

- determine the most effective methods for measuring focusing ability during clinical appointments

- establish groundwork for future research projects in this area

The research team will employ specialised equipment and techniques to study both infantile nystagmus and albinism with nystagmus. This comprehensive approach will help identify which measurement techniques are most accurate and acceptable to patients.

"The Nystagmus Network is delighted to fund this innovative project," says Dr Harshal Kubavat, chair of the charity’s research committee. "It promises to deliver greater understanding of the condition for both clinicians and patients, perfectly aligning with Mrs Clarke's wishes to make a lasting impact on nystagmus research and treatment."

Assets

Media Pack and announcement images are available.

Ends

Notes to editors

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Nystagmus is a serious, lifelong, incurable form of visual impairment where the eyes constantly move uncontrollably, affecting focus, depth perception and facial recognition. At least 1 in 1,000 babies are born with nystagmus. Many other people acquire nystagmus beyond infancy and into later life. Support is needed in the early years, at school, in employment and in everyday life.

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