

PRESS RELEASE

Indo-Japanese tie-up between SRM University and NCRM for world class research towards blindness prevention

Addressing corneal and retinal degenerative diseases using stem cells to be the main areas of focus



L to R : Dr. James Pandian - Dean, Dr. Samuel Abraham - Director NCRM, Dr. Syed Asghar Hussain - Assistant Professor, Dept. of Ophthalmology, Dr. S. Vinayam - Med. Supdt., Dr. S.V. Swamy Raj - HOD, Dept. of Ophthal, Hon'ble Dr. P. Thangaraju - Pro Vice Chancellor (Medical), Dr. Gireesh - Deputy Dean & Vice Principal

Chennai, 24 July 2014; **SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, SRM University** at Kattankulathur has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chennai based Indo-Japan Institute **Nichi-In Centre for Regenerative Medicine (NCRM)** to foster joint research on enhancing ways to find a cell therapy based cure for potentially blinding corneal and retinal diseases. The landmark MoU was signed by Prof. Dr. P. Thangaraju, Pro Vice Chancellor (Medical) of SRM University and Dr. Samuel JK Abraham, Director NCRM.

India is the “Blind capital of the world”, with more than 15 million blind people of which, about 4.5 million corneal blind people are waiting for someone to donate eyes. Prof. Dr. S.V. Swamy Raj and Dr. Syed Asghar Hussain, the lead investigators at SRM University, said that blindness due to corneal diseases is an increasing burden due to lack of donor corneas. The supply is abysmally low compared to the demand. If the present trend continues, it is expected that the number of corneal blind individuals in India will increase from 8.4 million to 10.6 million by 2020. The world class expertise of NCRM, in having transported corneal endothelial precursors across the country in a simple manner and then; the transplantation in pilot studies with success have given us a hope to expand to other patients also.

In addition, blinding retinal conditions such as Retinitis Pigmentosa and Age-related Macular Degeneration have become some of the leading causes of blindness in millions of people across India; for which stem cell therapies hold the key for a cure; towards which the SRM-NCRM tie-up aims to endeavour.

For further queries please contact:

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