

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

December 13, 2025



Bridging Legacies and Frontiers: A Stellar Opening at APVRS 2025

By: Dr. Janice Maire N. Jordan-Yu

The 18th Congress of the Asia-Pacific Vitreo-Retina Society (APVRS) through our Congress President, Dr. Harvey Uy, has officially opened its doors today, setting a tone of reverence for our shared history and excitement for our technological future. The Opening Ceremony was highlighted by two landmark presentations that perfectly encapsulated the theme of "Retina 360": the prestigious Tano Lecture and the International Award Lecture.

The audience was first transported through the evolution of our field during the **APVRS 2025 Tano Lecture**, delivered by the distinguished **Dr. Rajvardhan Azad**. In his address, entitled "Crafting Vision through Eras: Tale of a Retinal Surgeon" Dr. Azad offered a masterful narrative that was as much a philosophical journey as it was a scientific one. He chronicled the transformation of Retinopathy of Prematurity management from its nascent, uncertain beginnings to the precise, sight-saving discipline it is today. His "tale" was a poignant reminder that every modern retina standard stands on the shoulders of giants and decades of relentless perseverance.

Following this retrospective, the focus shifted to the cutting edge of diagnostics with the **APVRS 2025 International Award Lecture** by **Dr. Srinivas Sadda**. His presentation, "Insights into Pathophysiology of AMD Revealed by High-Resolution Imaging," provided a deep dive into the microscopic landscapes of Age-related Macular Degeneration. Dr. Sadda demonstrated how advanced imaging modalities are no longer just documenting disease, but fundamentally rewriting our understanding of AMD pathogenesis. His insights promised a future where high-resolution data drives personalized therapeutic strategies.

Together, Dr. Azad and Dr. Sadda illustrated the full spectrum of the vitreoretinal profession: honoring the "craft" of the surgeon while embracing the "science" of the researcher. As the applause faded, the message was clear: the 18th APVRS Congress has officially begun, and the future of retina is in excellent hands.

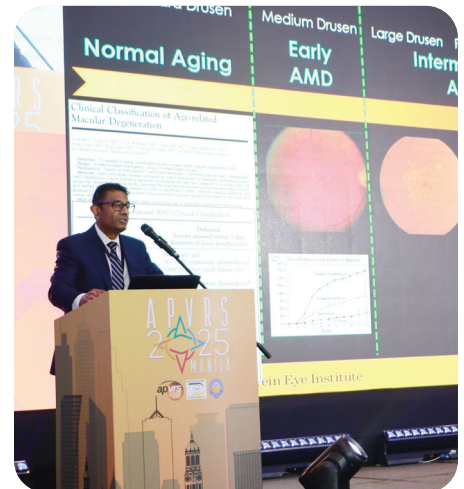


Exhibit Hall and Sponsorship Overview

By: Dr. Rem Paulino

The joint Asia Pacific Vitreo-Retina Society (APVRS) and Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO) Congress, scheduled from December 11-14, 2025, features a comprehensive Exhibit Hall that was formally opened by APVRS President **Prof. Hiroko Terasaki**, APVRS Secretary-General **Prof. Andrew Chang**, **Dr. Kenneth Fong**, and PAO President **Dr. Mary Ellen Sy**. Last December 12, 2025 at the SMX Convention Center in Manila. This year's Congress brings together a remarkable 60 sponsors, including 18 major sponsors, underscoring the strong industry partnership and continued commitment to advancing vitreoretinal science and ophthalmic care across the Asia-Pacific region.

The Exhibition is designed to serve as a central venue for showcasing cutting-edge technologies, clinical updates, emerging diagnostic modalities, innovative surgical systems, and contemporary therapeutic solutions. It provides delegates with a structured environment in which to engage with the latest developments in imaging, diagnostics, instrumentation, digital platforms, and integrated workflow



solutions that support present and future clinical practice.

Delegates can expect a highly dynamic and interactive setting, focused briefing, product demonstrations, guided presentations, and opportunities for direct consultation with technical and scientific representatives. These engagements allows clinicians to examine the practical applications of new technologies, explore advancements in ocular imaging and surgical precision, and gain insight into innovations that aim to enhance patient outcomes and elevate standards of care.

In addition to the industry booths, the Exhibit Hall features a dedicated space for

Free Paper Posters, interactive e-poster and video terminal stations, a research presentation stage, and the Basic and Advanced VR Surgical Wet Lab. Together, these components highlight the Congress's strong commitment to research, innovation, and continuous professional development in vitreoretina and ophthalmic practice.

With its combination of industry presence, clinical relevance, and extensive product showcases, the Exhibit Hall will serve as a valuable complement to the Congress's scientific sessions. It offers an ideal space for networking, knowledge exchange, and exploring partnerships that advance ophthalmic care in the region.



New Concepts in Diabetic Retinopathy: Advances in Retinal Imaging

By: Dr. Maria Giselle Dy

The session was chaired by **Dr. Carlo Artiaga** from the Philippines, **Dr. Srinivas Sadda** from the United States and **Dr. Anna Tan** from Singapore.

This was started off by discussing advancements in ocular coherence tomography angiography (OCTA), specifically the potential benefits of swept-source OCTA (ss-OCTA) and wide-field ss-OCTA imaging by Dr.

Anna Tan. This was followed by **Dr. Recivall Salongcay** who presented teleophthalmology with the aid of mobile or handheld retinal imaging devices, such as the fundus camera, and artificial intelligence (AI) for community-based diabetic retinopathy screening in the Philippines. **Dr. Paolo Antonio Silva** from the Philippines then discussed combined ultra-wide field imaging (UWF) and OCT imaging in diabetic retinopathy screening, as well as UWF-fluorescein angiography (UWF-FA) and optimized color fundus photo images for better diabetic retinopathy detection and severity grading. Dr. Srinivas Sadda followed, presenting a comprehensive

list with corresponding significance of OCT biomarkers in predicting outcomes in diabetic retinopathy treatment. Subsequently, benefits of intraoperative OCT during tractional retinal detachment surgery and the port delivery system with ranibizumab was presented by **Dr. Gavin Tan** from Singapore. This was followed by **Dr. Stela Vujosevic** from Italy who presented color fundus autofluorescence (FAF) with OCT-A as imaging modalities for understanding retinal perfusion in diabetic retinopathy, which may aid in the advancement and understanding and management of the disease. Lastly, **Dr. Anat Lowenstein** from Israel discussed the potential of home OCT in conjunction with AI to assess disease activity between office visits among patients treated for diabetic macular edema.

Further discussions between the audience and speakers commenced during the question and answer segment, and the program was closed by the session chairs.

December 13, 2025

Seeing Green: Sustainability's Essential Role in Ophthalmology

By: Dr. Ben Aguilar

Environmental and energy sustainability has been growing as a valuable topic for consideration in ophthalmologic practice, evidenced by its dedicated session held on December 12, 2025 at 11AM in Function Room 1. Local and international speakers explored evidence and experience-based ways to minimize material waste and maximize usage of existing resources. They also examined how sustainable practices affect patients, practitioners, institutions, and the environment, emphasizing that responsible care and resource stewardship can coexist and reinforce one another.

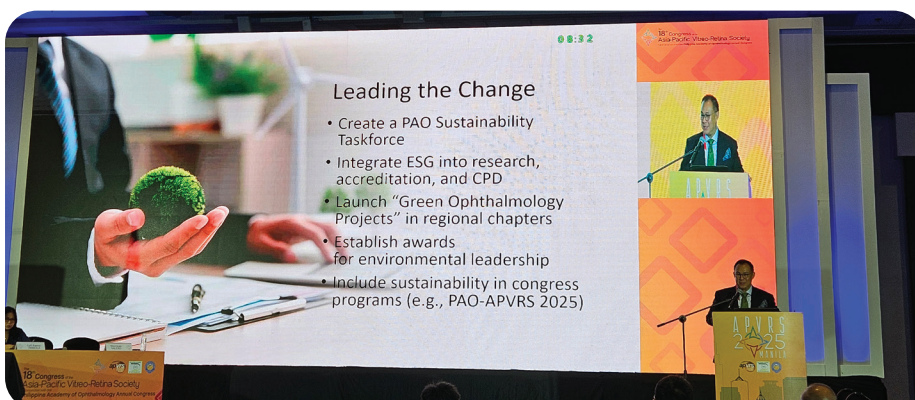
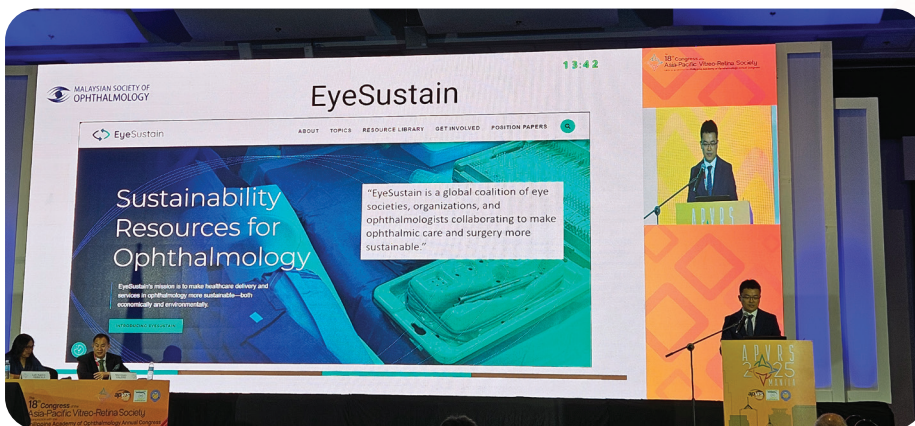
The program discussions' structure reflected the widening lens of the importance of sustainability—from individual encounters to hospital systems and, finally, to communities. The first speaker was **Dr. Vivek Dave**, a vitreoretinal surgeon and researcher, addressed per-patient and per-procedure considerations when reusing supplies and instruments often marketed as single-use. He emphasized that patient safety and autonomy must remain paramount, not only in



terms of sterility but also functional effectiveness, and highlighted the need for patient awareness and informed consent when reprocessed equipment is used. **Dr. Cesar Ramon Espiritu** broadened the scope by addressing sustainability at the hospital level. He highlighted the value of precise data collection—whether at a per-procedure, per-floor, or per-sector level—arguing that such information is crucial for informed decision-making aimed at reducing energy and resource waste. **Dr. Wee Min Teh** discussed the broader implications of ophthalmologic waste on community sustainability and sanitation. Meanwhile, **Dr. Aramis Torrefranca Jr.** advocated for a preventive, community-focused approach to medicine, illustrating how

engaging various levels of healthcare in Bohol led to reduced waste and improved ophthalmologic outcomes in the area.

The session was moderated by **Dr. Lyll Karen Arriola** and **Dr. Sherman Valero**. The latter also rounded out the session by rallying the Philippine Ophthalmology community, specifically the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology, to prioritize sustainability as a core issue, co-equal with other critical clinical topics. Dr. Valero noted encouraging trends in the organization's policies and actions, suggesting a promising shift towards sustainable practices.





Recent Advance in Management of Retina Complications in Pathologic Myopia

By: Dr. Boz Laxamana

The scientific session on Pathologic Myopia presented a comprehensive and progressive discussion of its underlying mechanisms, diagnostic advances, and evolving surgical management. The session opened with an in-depth discussion on the role of Bruch's membrane, emphasizing its biomechanical importance in axial elongation and its contribution to lacquer cracks, patchy atrophy, and secondary macular pathology, reframing pathologic myopia as a disease driven by structural failure rather than refractive error alone.

Advances in multimodal imaging were subsequently highlighted, with emphasis on widefield OCT, OCT angiography, and ultra-widefield imaging for accurate phenotyping, early detection of tractional changes, and longitudinal monitoring of disease progression. These imaging modalities were shown to be critical in guiding both medical and surgical decision-making.

Management of myopic choroidal neovascularization was reviewed with a focus on anti-VEGF therapy as first-line treatment. Early initiation, individualized retreatment strategies, and OCT-guided follow-up were

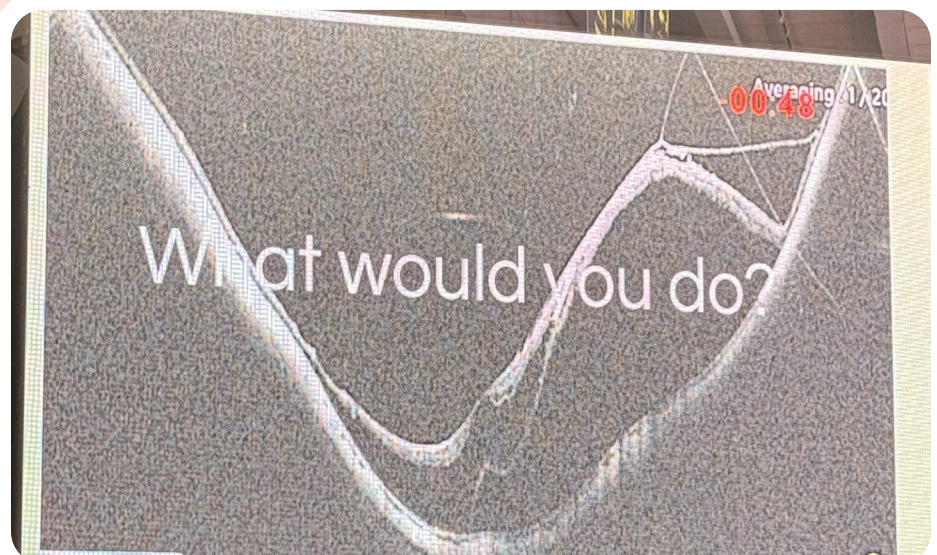
underscored as key factors in optimizing visual outcomes while reducing treatment burden.

The session also explored atypical staphylomas, highlighting how non-posterior scleral deformities alter tractional forces and influence disease behavior. Recognition of these variants was emphasized as essential for appropriate imaging interpretation and surgical planning.

Surgical strategies for myopic traction maculopathy were extensively discussed. Pars plana vitrectomy with silicone oil tamponade was presented as a viable option for high-risk myopic foveoschisis, providing sustained internal support in selected cases. **Dr. Simon Szeto** presented outcomes

of myopic macular hole surgery using ILM flap techniques without gas tamponade, demonstrating favorable closure rates, earlier postoperative OCT assessment, and faster visual recovery.

For complex or refractory macular holes, **Dr. Soefiandi Soedarman** highlighted human amniotic membrane transplantation as an effective anatomical solution despite limited functional gains. Finally, **Dr. Wilson Wong Jun Jie** emphasized macular buckling as a biomechanical approach that counteracts centrifugal scleral forces, offering durable anatomical stabilization in advanced or vitrectomy-refractory myopic traction maculopathy.



December 13, 2025



Lecture Series Highlights: Insights into Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration

By: Dr. Adrian Santos

A recent lecture series brought together international experts to discuss the evolving understanding of Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), with a particular focus on geographic atrophy (GA). The sessions explored the disease from pathogenesis to diagnosis, functional assessment, and emerging treatment strategies, underscoring the complexity and rapidly advancing landscape of dry AMD management.

The series began with an overview of key pathways implicated in GA, including the visual cycle, mitochondrial dysfunction, and

complement system activation. These mechanisms are currently being investigated as potential therapeutic targets, offering hope for future disease-modifying treatments. Expanding beyond the eye, the concept of the gut-retina axis was introduced, highlighting how gut microbiome alterations—often influenced by high-fat and high-sugar diets—may contribute to inflammation and neurodegeneration in non-neovascular AMD. While exact mechanisms remain unclear, dietary modification and probiotic therapies were discussed as promising areas for further research.

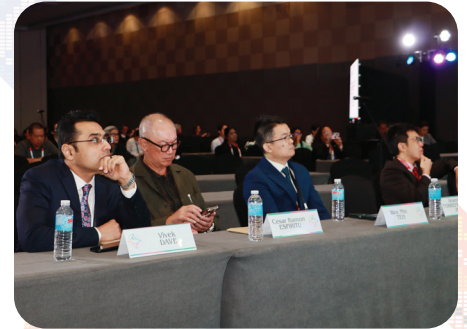
Clinically relevant discussions emphasized that retinal fluid in dry AMD does not always signify neovascular disease. Non-neovascular

AMD-associated fluid tends to be more stable, reinforcing the importance of careful monitoring rather than reflexive treatment. This led naturally to the role of multimodal imaging, which remains essential for accurate diagnosis, early detection of neovascular conversion, and informed clinical decision-making. Speakers also highlighted the importance of assessing visual function beyond standard visual acuity. Tools such as low-luminance visual acuity testing, contrast sensitivity, microperimetry, fixation analysis, and reading performance provide a more comprehensive evaluation of disease impact, particularly in patients with geographic atrophy.

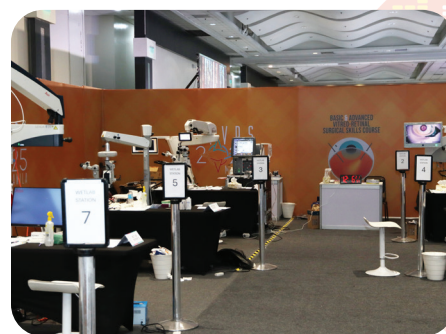
The series concluded with discussions on the challenges of GA clinical trials and the growing recognition of proteomics as a dynamic complement to genetic data. Ongoing and emerging therapies aimed at reducing oxidative damage, inflammation, and photoreceptor loss reflect continued progress toward effective treatments for dry AMD. Overall, the lecture series emphasized a holistic and forward-looking approach to understanding and managing dry AMD.



DAY 1 PHOTOS



DAY 1 PHOTOS



DAY 1 PHOTOS



DAY 1 PHOTOS





Connecting the Dots: Understanding the Roles of Lasers in Retinal Diseases

By: Dr. Mara Clemente

Following the dynamic APVRS opening ceremony, a symposium in the current roles of lasers in retinal diseases started next door. Chaired by the internationally renowned ophthalmologists: **Dr. Kenneth Fong, Dr. Seung-Young Yu, and Dr. Eleonore Iguban.**

Sticking to the Basics

The session started with Dr. Papa giving a brief recap on the types of lasers and the basic principles

behind their therapeutic uses. Various speakers also reiterated the tried and tested uses of lasers in diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular diseases, and polypoid choroidal vasculopathy. They shared studies as well as their personal experiences on their efficacy, sustainability and practicality.

Somewhere in Between

Dr. Wong introduced a general consensus on subthreshold laser settings that prepared us for Dr. Rajendran's talk on its intriguing treatment in diabetic macular edema and Dr. Wu's engaging perspective on its role in the management of Central Serous Chorioretinopathy. While

these proved that there is no one true path in laser treatment, they are often preferred to go in combination with other modalities. Dr. Chen discussed photodynamic therapy and other possible laser treatment in polypoid choroidal vasculopathy. Their insights prove that novel means can augment traditional concepts thereby improving patient outcomes.

The Road to Innovation

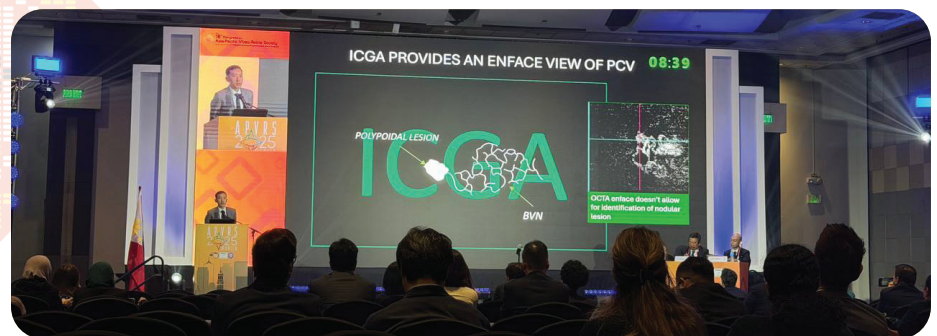
Dr. Ng began by giving a recap of lasers in retinal vascular occlusion but his emphasis was on knowing when not to do procedural laser. It was a refreshing perception giving flexibility in management. Dr. Kim introduced the concept of photobiomodulation and its possible role in dry age related macular degeneration- proving that contemporary techniques can change the way a disease is being treated. Finally, Dr. Agustiawan discussed an algorithm helping us decide whether prophylactic laser therapy is needed for patients that are about to undergo cataract or refractive surgery.

Innovation and collaboration has been the highlight of this symposium- now all we have to do is connect the dots (figuratively)!

Advancements in PCV Imaging

By: Dr. Joy Dizon

The recent lecture series on polypoidal choroidal vasculopathy (PCV) provided a comprehensive overview of current diagnostic approaches, highlighting both traditional and emerging methods. The discussion began with the non-ICGA diagnostic criteria, which have grown increasingly relevant in settings where indocyanine green angiography (ICGA) is not readily accessible. Speakers emphasized the role of multimodal imaging—particularly OCT, OCT angiography, and color fundus photography—in identifying hallmark features suggestive of PCV. These include sharp-peaked pigment epithelial detachments, sub-retinal orange nodules, a notched or “M-shaped” PED configuration, and the double-layer sign, which represents the separation of the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) from Bruch's



membrane by a branching vascular network. Although these findings are highly supportive, the presenters underscored that non-ICGA criteria should be interpreted collectively to improve diagnostic confidence.

Despite advancements in non-invasive imaging, the lectures reinforced that ICGA remains the gold standard for PCV diagnosis. ICGA uniquely visualizes the choroidal vasculature and can directly demonstrate the branching vascular network and polypoidal lesions that define the disease. Its ability to detect

early choroidal hyperpermeability and late staining patterns provide a level of precision unmatched by other modalities. The speakers stressed that, when available, ICGA is essential not only for confirming PCV but also for guiding treatment plans and monitoring therapeutic response.

Overall, the lecture series highlighted how multimodal imaging enhances diagnostic accuracy in PCV, while reaffirming that ICGA remains central to definitive diagnosis and clinical decision-making.

Advances in Inherited Retinal Diseases: From Diagnostics to Emerging Therapies

By: Dr. Angelica Vega

Significant advances in inherited retinal diseases (IRDs) were highlighted during a dedicated symposium at the APVRS Congress, covering progress in diagnostics, emerging therapies, and future treatment strategies. While innovation in IRDs continues to accelerate, speakers emphasized that accurate diagnosis remains the cornerstone of effective management. Key challenges in electroretinography (ERG) interpretation were addressed by **Dr. Graham Holder**, who discussed variability related to electrode characteristics, signal localization, and overreliance on machine-generated numerical outputs. He emphasized the importance of careful inspection of waveforms, replication of recordings, adherence to standardized protocols, and correlation with clinical findings and underlying pathophysiology. The importance of locally derived normative data and detailed technician documentation was underscored to ensure reliable electrophysiologic assessment. Advances in molecular diagnostics were also reviewed by **Dr. Hui-Lin Chin**, tracing the evolution of IRD gene discovery from early retinitis pigmentosa research to the era of gene-targeted therapies.

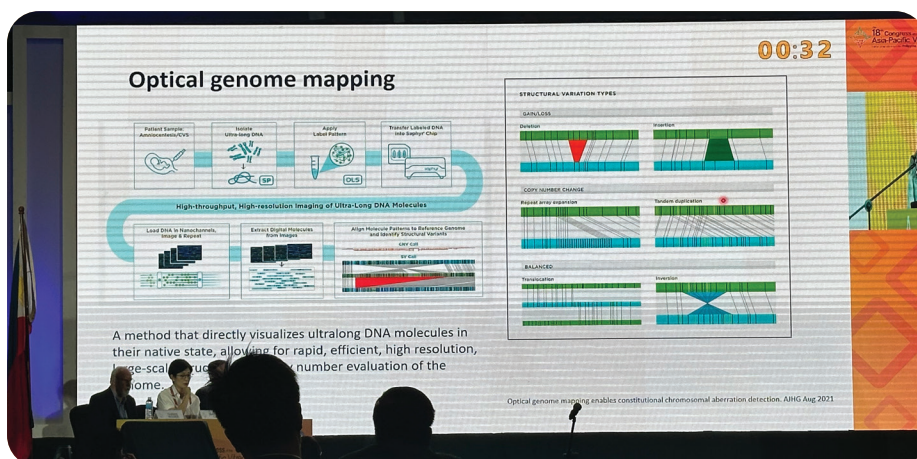
Despite improvements in accessibility and diagnostic yield with targeted IRD gene panels, Dr. Chin noted that limitations remain when causative variants are not included in panel-based testing. Emerging technologies such as optical genome mapping and long-read sequencing were presented



as promising approaches to address “missing heritability.” Looking ahead, speakers highlighted the potential role of artificial intelligence-driven analysis, expanding genotype-phenotype correlations, and multi-omics strategies in enhancing diagnostic precision and accelerating gene discovery. Together, these advances reflect a shift toward more comprehensive and personalized diagnostic pathways for patients with inherited retinal disease.

Therapeutic innovation featured prominently, with **Dr. Bart Peter Leroy** presenting updates on gene therapy demonstrating sustained functional benefits following voretigene neparvovec (Luxturna®), particularly when administered at

younger ages. However, inflammation and chorioretinal atrophy following treatment remain incompletely understood, highlighting the need for careful monitoring and optimized inflammatory control, especially in second-eye treatments. Strategies for addressing large genes, including antisense oligonucleotides and dual-vector approaches, were also discussed. Beyond gene replacement, disease-modifying pharmacologic therapy was highlighted by **Dr. Quan Dong Nguyen** through tnlarebant, an oral retinol-binding protein 4 antagonist for Stargardt disease, which demonstrated slowed atrophic lesion growth, stabilization of visual acuity, and a favorable safety profile in Phase 3 studies. Regenerative cell therapy approaches were presented by **Dr. Masayo Takahashi**, who discussed long-term outcomes of induced pluripotent stem cell-derived retinal pigment epithelium transplantation, emphasizing careful patient selection and disease-specific targeting. A major highlight of the symposium was first-in-human gene therapy for RDH12 retinopathy presented by **Dr. Ruifang Sui**, with PUMCH-E101 demonstrating a favorable safety profile and clinically meaningful improvements in visual function, supporting its potential as the first disease-modifying therapy for RDH12-associated inherited retinal degeneration.



IRD Session From the Perspective of an IRD Specialist

By: Patrick Santiago, MD, DPBO, FPCS, FPAO, MHM

Inherited retinal diseases is a topic that few people enjoy and understand, but I was really starstruck at the caliber of the speakers we had in Manila APVRS. Not to get ahead of myself, it was fantastic! We needed more time for Q and A.

The lecture on ERG pitfalls was given by Prof. Graham Holder. As usual, it was easy to understand, and the cases highlighted how easy it was to make a bad ERG. It is usually the easiest way to fast track learning, from people who helped invent and develop the technology. And Graham Holder is the master teacher for this topic, with the variety of ERG case mishaps he presented.

Prof. Bart Leroy presented inflammation after viral vector delivery of gene therapy, and how finding Luxterna was not the silver

bullet we all imagine it to be. It was an honest and a reality grounding talk. Prof. Ruifang Sui also presented the results of the first in human trials for the next genetic retinal disorders, and it was a promising phase I. I know most of us see gene therapy as the messiah to save our IRD patients, but hearing from the big names in this field humbles me at the patience and honesty it takes to get a drug into practical use. I know surgical retina people are usually the ones known for courage, patience and tenacity, but those who move in this IRD specialty exhibit these at longer time measures, in years.

Prof. Masayo Takahashi of the Kobe Eye Center presented RPE strips and sheet insertion to deal with geographic atrophy to save photoreceptors. You would think that the IRD session was a medical retina session but it was also a surgical one too. My retina surgeon mind was swimming at the idea of performing this surgery in the future. To save GA cases via surgery!

The super fresh results released last Dec 1, 2025, of the Tnlarebant discussed by Prof. Quan Dong Nguyen was a perfect contrast to the surgical approach for atrophy. It is novel for an oral medication to show 34% GA progression reduction. I'm sure we need to try and apply this to other diseases.

Lastly, Dr. Hui-Lin Chin, a pediatrician who specializes in genetic disorders, presented the evolution of our current molecular approach to genetic disorders. This was a masterclass summary of the progress made for IRDs, that was in the past, approached by clinicians as nothing-to-be-done cases.

We allowed everyone to present with as much time as they needed, as we know there was much to be learned from each and every talk. If we had more time, this small group of unique individuals could spend hours talking, and sharing views about work on IRDs, but all good things must come to an end. Looking forward to IRD APVRS 2026!

Asia-Pacific Young Ophthalmologists: Work Hard, Rock Harder at APVRS Manila

By: Dr. Janin Lou Billano

The Young Ophthalmologists Leaders Night at Lola Cafe brought together emerging ophthalmic leaders from the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, Maldives, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Hongkong, Singapore, Mongolia, Malaysia, United Kingdom, China, and India in an inspiring evening of connection and shared vision. It was a celebration of diversity, collaboration, and the collective commitment to advancing eye care across borders. The momentous occasion was graced by Dr RV Paul Chan, from University of Illinois at Chicago.

This was followed by the YO Night at Hard Rock Cafe, where the atmosphere shifted into a lively and memorable party—filled with laughter, music, and genuine camaraderie. Beyond the fun, the evening strengthened friendships, fostered professional bonds, and reminded everyone that the ophthalmology community thrives not only through excellence in practice, but also through unity and shared joy.



December 13, 2025

Meeting of the Minds, Shared Laughter

By: Dr. Catherine Dianne Delfino

The VRSP-sponsored dinner, held at Cyan restaurant in Lanson Hotel on December 12, was a remarkable evening attended by nearly 150 guests. The atmosphere was filled with camaraderie and friendship, celebrating shared interests and connections among attendees. Guests enjoyed a delightful array of delicious food, enhancing the warm and inviting ambiance of the gathering. Notable attendees included members of the APVRS Council, the PAO council, and the VRSP council, alongside local chairs of the APVRS sessions. The event fostered networking and collaboration, leaving participants with lasting memories of a successful and enjoyable night.

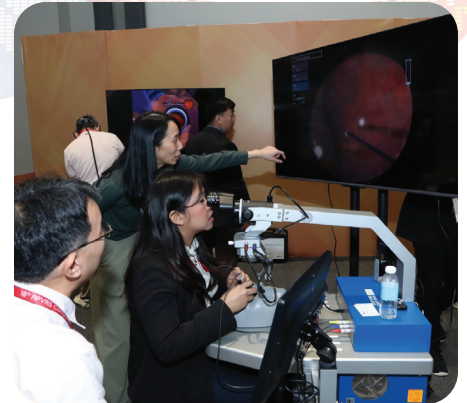


Enhancing Skills thru Wet Lab

By: Dr. Carlo Nasol

The 2025 APVRS-PAO Joint Annual Congress Wetlab opened with an outstanding Day 1, setting the tone for an exceptional learning experience. The Wet Lab was a huge success, drawing enthusiastic participation from local ophthalmologists, residents, and fellows eager to enhance their surgical skills. One of the highlights was the presence of foreign delegates who served as expert teachers, generously sharing their expertise and elevating the learning environment with global best practices and hands-on guidance.

The Wet Lab featured eight fully equipped stations, each dedicated to a key surgical skill essential in modern vitreoretina practice. Participants rotated through stations covering basic vitrectomy techniques, pars plana vitrectomy, and scleral-fixated intraocular lens (IOL) implantation, ensuring a comprehensive and immersive training experience. Delegates praised the structured flow, ample practice time, and individualized mentorship provided at every step.



APVRS Council Meeting

WRITERS

Dr. Janice Maire N. Jordan-Yu
Dr. Rem Paulino
Dr. Maria Giselle Dy
Dr. Ben Aguilar
Dr. Boz Laxamana
Dr. Adrian Santos
Dr. Mara Clemente

Dr. Joy Dizon
Dr. Angelica Vega
Dr. Patrick Santiago
Dr. Carlo Nasol
Dr. Janin Lou Billano
Dr. Catherine Dianne Delfino