

The Lions Eye

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Lions Eye Foundation of California-Nevada, Inc.



Summer 2017

Emergency Care: Saving a Patient's Vision

On a daily basis, our residents are asked to examine patients in the emergency room, and they also field requests for in-house consultations at Sutter/CPMC. Eye emergencies happen, and our staff, residents and fellows respond quickly to provide the appropriate care. Mr. Jose Saldaña's story is one such case.

Mr. Saldaña works in construction and was removing tile with a hammer when he suddenly felt something fly into his eye. Jose describes having immediate pain and severe vision loss. Unfortunately, he was not wearing protective glasses at the time. Looking at the hammer, Jose noticed a piece of the metal had broken off and he wondered if that was what had hit his eye.

Being uninsured, Mr. Saldaña worried about how he was going to pay for his care. "I knew something was really wrong, and that I needed to see a doctor for care, but never thought I would have a chance since I did not have insurance," stated Jose. The Foundation got involved after receiving a call from our retina fellow, Dr. Judy Chen. Dr. Chen explained that Jose needed to be seen quickly and might need surgical care that same day. When Mr. Saldaña was examined at the Lions Eye Clinic he could only discern hand motions in his left eye, which was a dramatic change from the 20/20 vision he enjoyed prior to the accident. His eye was swollen and red. There was a 2mm linear laceration in the middle of his cornea. The lens of the eye had formed a completely white cataract and there was noted to be a similar 2mm linear tear in the lens. Because of all the inflammation in the front of the eye, the retina could not be visualized on examination. An ultrasound revealed a highly reflective substance lodged in the retina and back wall of the eye. It was suspected to be a piece of metal.



Dr. Judy Chen and patient Jose Saldaña



Black area shows retinal scar (dead tissue) due to Mr. Saldaña's injury

Multiple journal papers have been published about intraocular metal foreign bodies. Many of those papers are a direct result of eye injuries sustained during the Iraq war. The standard of care is to remove these foreign bodies as soon as possible, due to concern for infection and the leeching of iron into the eye which can cause irreversible vision loss. With the assistance of the Lions Eye Foundation, Mr. Saldaña received emergency surgery. The surgery included a cataract removal, a vitrectomy and the removal of the iron foreign body which had luckily missed the central retina area. Because of how quickly the problem was addressed, he did not have a retinal detachment or significant toxicity to the retina from the foreign body.

Two months after his surgery, Jose is doing extremely well despite the severity of his injury. His best-corrected vision with glasses is approximately 20/70, which is driving vision. He is back at work, although he is now very conscientious about using safety glasses to protect his eyes. Mr. Saldaña's eye is healing very well, and he will likely need a second surgery in the coming months to implant an intraocular lens in the left eye for maximal visual rehabilitation. Jose and his family are extremely grateful for the generosity of the Lions, without which he would almost certainly have gone blind in his injured eye. Jose thinks of our doctors as, "The angels that came to save my eye."

Mission Statement: "The Lions Eye Foundation preserves and restores the gift of sight by providing free ophthalmic examinations, operations and medications to the less fortunate members of our community."

Flashes and Floaters

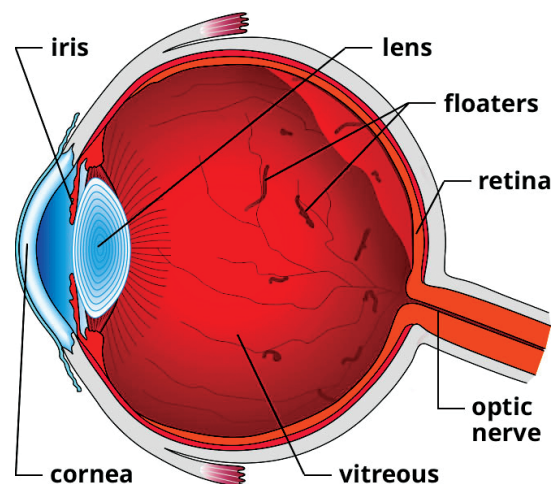
Have you ever looked up at a bright blue sky or stared at a plain background and noticed little “floaters” dancing around your field of vision? They may look like tiny cobwebs, wiggly floating strands, or dots that may come and go. Though they may look like they are in front of your eye, they’re actually inside it. Whatever shape they take, these floaters are usually harmless and may go away with time.

The Cause: As our eyes age, the vitreous (clear, gel-like fluid that fills the inside of the eye) may start to thicken and/or shrink and slightly pull away from the back wall of the eye, causing clumps or strands inside the vitreous. These tiny clumps cast shadows on the retina, the layer of cells lining the back of the eye that senses light and allows you to see.

Sudden Floaters: There may be cause for concern if multiple new floaters appear all at once, out of nowhere....especially if you are over age 45. The retina can tear if the shrinking vitreous gel pulls away from the wall of the eye suddenly and more forcefully than is common. This sometimes causes a small amount of bleeding in the eye that may appear as new floaters. A torn retina is always a serious problem. Call your ophthalmologist if multiple new floaters appear suddenly and don’t go away.

Flashing Lights: As we age, occasional visual flashes may be another common sensation caused by gel rubbing or pulling on the eye. The sensation can come and go for several weeks or months, but, if you notice a sudden onset of repeated light flashes, contact your ophthalmologist immediately to rule out a torn retina.

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Vitreous detachment

CPMC Retina Fellow - Joseph B. Alsberge, MD

Joseph Alsberge, MD was born in Fresno, CA. He completed his Ophthalmology Residency at the University of California, San Francisco in 2017. He joined West Coast Retina and Sutter/CPMC in July 2017 for a two-year retina fellowship. Joe attended Weill Cornell Medical College and graduated with his medical degree in 2013. He will start his rotations through the Lions Eye Clinic this year in October and will be responsible for providing retina care and surgery for our Lions patients.

Dr. Alsberge has a particular interest in providing care for the underserved in the United States and abroad. In 2007-09, Joe was the Project Manager for Village Health Works and assisted in the day-to-day management of a rural non-profit medical clinic in Burundi, Africa. The following year, he was the Clinical Coordinator for Partners in Health in Rwanda, Africa. His responsibilities included assisting with the design and implementation of a program for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV at multiple district hospitals and health centers in rural Rwanda.

In his free time, Joe is an avid rock climber, enjoys strength training and is an enthusiastic home chef. He loves music and is trained in classical guitar.



Dr. Joseph Alsberge

Meet Dr. Leila Chinn

Our current 2nd Vice President, Dr. Leila Chinn, has been a member of the LEF Board since 2010. She served as the LEF Treasurer from 2010 to 2016. Leila became a lion in 1999, and is a member of the Walnut Creek Ignacio Valley Commuter Lions Club.

Dr. Chinn graduated from the University of California Berkley. After her undergraduate studies, she attended the UC Berkley School of Optometry where she graduated in 1990. She began her private practice career in Antioch. Always curious, Leila wanted to learn more about the practical side of her chosen profession. To accomplish this, she returned to school at California State University Hayward where she earned her MBA degree in 2001.

Leila joined Brookside Optometric Group in Stockton in 2002 and divides her work between Stockton and Oakland. Her favorite aspect of her job is having the opportunity to help patients receive the highest optometric vision care. She really enjoys seeing her pediatric patients mature. Leila and her husband Charles also enjoy raising their beautiful daughter Kristen.

Leila, who grew up in San Francisco, was born in Hong Kong before moving to the United States at age four. Dr. Chinn started her volunteer life at age 12. She has been the recipient of many awards for her work in Lions including two International Leadership Medals, The International President's Certificate of Appreciation and a Melvin Jones Fellowship. She also volunteers as a Junior Achievement teacher at her daughter's school.

Leila has stated that one of her goals for LEF would be to help implement "improved efficiency in the LEF program as medical care and practices change in the 21st century with the advances in technology."



Dr. Leila Chinn

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Eyesi Cataract and Vitreoretinal Surgery Simulator

The high level of hand-eye coordination and repetition needed for microsurgery along with many other factors drive the need for better ways to improve surgical skills during the training period for the LEF resident doctors. Surgical simulators have been used by many other specialties in order to provide a controlled training environment with objective assessment of surgical skills. The Sutter/CPMC residency program at the Lions Eye Clinic has recently acquired an Eyesi Cataract and Vitreoretinal Surgery Simulator for use by the residents. This simulator has the ability to lead the beginning surgeon through each step of the procedure from start to finish and provide objective measurements of progress.

The Eyesi Simulator consists of cataract and retina surgery training modules that provide a 3-D representation of the real surgical experience. An individual resident's progress can be scored and data stored evaluating various parameters. Use of this simulator enables our residents to provide better surgical care for our patients.

