

Expensive new treatment for retina degeneration

According to a leading Daily, there are currently about 1,000 cases of people who suffer from hereditary degeneration of the retina, and 10 to 20 new cases are projected to be added each year.

The first-of-its kind genetic treatment for blindness, Luxturna, a medication against hereditary degeneration of the retina that can lead to total blindness, will be sold for \$850,000 in the United States, making it one of the world's most expensive medical treatments.

The manufacturer, Philadelphia-based Spark Therapeutics, informs that the treatment will be administered in a single dose. The retail price for the treatment will be approximately \$425,000 per eye, which is less than the \$1 million price tag that had been expected before the company received FDA approval in mid-December.

Spark has promised to reimburse patients if Luxturna does not prove to be effective, and said it expects US health authorities to authorise payment in stages.

Yogita Rajgandhi gains recognition for Vosh India Chapter

Volunteer Optometric Society to Humanity (VOSH) International-USA is committed to supporting sustainable eye care. All VOSH members support clinics and hospitals and the people who work in them. This NGO has helped restore sight to more than 1,000,000 individuals around the world. VOSH and its partners work to build long-term solutions to provide eye care in developing countries.

Optometrist Yogita L Rajgandhi, President of Vosh-India-Maharashtra Chapter and Director, Rajgandhi Eye Care Institute, Mumbai, has been dedicatedly working since several decades to promote optometry and visual health, to spread the word, all the while assisting so many in need.

Pleased by the work she has been doing with the help of optometrists to expand their services in the field of eye care and to serve Indian citizens, VOSH-International has selected VOSH-India as the VOSH-Chapter of the Month, the first chapter so recognised in 2018.

Dr Mel Muchnik, Communications/PR Chair VOSH/International Board of Directors, vide an email to Yogita wrote, "We at VOSH INTERNATIONAL are delighted to recognise you and the chapter in this way and to give visibility to VOSH-India. The level of activity and leadership you personally energise and achieve via optometric activities conducted in India are extraordinary. Congratulations to VOSH-India, VOSH Chapter of the Month! Keep up the good work!"

OrCam and Vision Serve Alliance to promote Artificial Vision Device

OrCam Technologies, artificial vision innovator for people who are blind or visually impaired, is said to be collaborating with VisionServe Alliance, headquartered in St. Louis, MO, a consortium of executive directors/CEOs of non-profit agencies that provide specialised services to people who are blind or with severe vision loss, to bring the latest wearable assistive technology to VSA member organisations.

Together both the organisations will promote OrCam MyEye, a wearable assistive technology device, to VSA members that include organisations focusing on national advocacy, service issues, employment and manufacturing, adult vision rehabilitation, early intervention, schools, dog guides, low vision clinics and Braille production.

"OrCam is honoured to partner with the VisionServe Alliance consortium of non-profits throughout the United States which provides vital support services to people who are blind and visually impaired," said Elad Serfaty, OrCam senior vice president. "This collaboration allows OrCam to engage the VSA's members and their communities about the independence-giving OrCam MyEye artificial vision device. OrCam deeply shares the VSA's commitment to 'enrich the lives of those living with vision loss.'"

The OrCam MyEye artificial vision device instantly and discreetly reads printed and digital text aloud – from any surface – and recognises faces, products and money notes. The wearable device communicates visual information by utilising a small, intuitive smart camera mounted on the wearer's eyeglass frame, which connects to a smartphone-sized computer.

OrCam MyEye is alleged to make newspapers, books, computer and smartphone screens, restaurant menus, labels on supermarket products and street signs accessible in real time.