The creation of the Global Alliance represents the beginning of a new phase in the development of the eye banks around the world, and the Pan-American Association of Eye Banks (APABO) is proud to be part of this initiative and to work with so many motivated professionals on a global level and contribute to the harmonizing of global practices.

When APABO began almost 30 years ago, most Latin American ophthalmologists performed corneal transplants with tissue from the United States. One of the significant challenges of the association was to promote a change in mindset and stimulate the obtainment of tissue locally - with the creation and/or improvement of local eye banks. Headquartered in the United States, APABO sought to disseminate information on the establishment and running of effective eye banks and to promote uniform standards throughout the Americas. Focusing most of its efforts on education and professional training, APABO has organized annual courses regarding the organization and implementation of standardized, efficient and sustainable eye banks. As a result, several countries in Latin America are self-sustaining of corneas for transplantation.

Despite the many activities of APABO to promote standardization of eye banking and to reduce the number of vision impaired due to corneal disease in the Americas, there is still much to accomplish in Central and South America and we are still dealing with significant cultural and socioeconomic heterogeneity, making the challenge to establish eye banks different in each country.

Given this scenario, the launch of the Global Alliance is very welcome, and will certainly strengthen the work and the credibility of all of the regional eye bank associations. Together, it will be easier to: identify and understand local needs, to gather reliable data, to offer proper counsel, to achieve better outcomes, and to have a collective voice with the leaders of global health.

We are aware of the huge challenge and responsibility that the Global Alliance will face, but we are convinced that, with the commitment of the six associations, and the talent of so many passionate people, we can contribute significantly to reduce the discrepancies among the eye banking communities worldwide. With the Global Alliance, we initiate a new chapter in the fulfillment of our mission to eradicate corneal blindness through corneal transplantation.

Congratulations to all partners of GAEB! We are looking forward to meeting you in San Diego! Thank you
GLOBAL EYE BANKS RESPOND TO THE EBOLA OUTBREAK

Due to the recent outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa over the past few months, members of the Global Alliance of Eye Bank Associations (GAEBA) have commenced collaboration and sharing of regional responses on the EVD - in relation to ocular tissue donation – to ensure global preparedness.

As response plans vary across the world, primarily due to the proximity to the EVD outbreak, the changes to the level of risk facing each country, and the spread of the disease, GAEBA therefore advise that all Eye Bank Managers and Medical Directors contact their closest regional Eye Bank Association or the GAEB A, to ascertain local/regional exclusion and deferral criteria for EVD.

Key Points about EVD

- A person can remain infectious for up to 7 weeks as long as their blood and secretions contain the virus
- Symptoms include; sudden onset fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function and sometimes internal and external bleeding
- There is a higher concentration of the EVD within the blood, organs and tissues during the immediate death and recovery phase, as the body excretes live and infective viruses
- Laboratory findings include low white blood and platelet count and elevated liver enzymes

Recommendations (Regional Variations):

Immediate exclusion from donation

- All persons known/diagnosed with EVD are excluded from all donation

Deferred donation

- Asymptomatic travellers or residents returning from an EVD affected area should be deferred from donation of cells, tissues and organs for 60 days after return, provided they have reported no EVD symptoms (e.g. undiagnosed febrile illness)
- confirmed EVD exposure (e.g. contact with infected person), cannot donate within 60 days of exposure or if being monitored for exposure, within 60 days of the commencement of the monitoring period
- While the long term effects of Ebola survivors are unclear, donation coordinators are advised to consider a 12 month deferral period following exposure.

Please Contact the Global Alliance via:
info@gaeba.org or via www.gaeba.org
Global Data Project

In October, the Global Alliance commenced its statistical data development group. Step 1 is to discuss and develop a founding base for the collection of global data, with key areas to be addressed. From Step 1 the development group will put together a proposed plan for consideration by the Association and prepare, ready for further discussion at the San Diego Meeting in 2015, the final plan prior to implementation.

Key areas to be addressed:

1. Determining current regional/country collection patterns
2. Determine existing similarities
3. Ascertain immediate, short term and long term goals for data collection
4. Address data collection ideas as identified/recommended by the WHO and World Health Assembly to determine implementation into a Global Alliance data framework
5. Ascertain if and how data collection can benefit the global eye banking community, corneal community and the wider Blindness Prevention Strategies (i.e. International Association of the Prevention of Blindness strategies) etc.
6. Explore the realities, challenges and legalities of collection within each association, region and individual eye bank
7. Determine how the Global Alliance will collect the data (i.e. timeframes and reporting platforms)
8. Determine language (nomenclature) in reporting
9. Determine costs for development and maintenance of data at global, regional and local level (i.e. burden on staff for collection and reporting)

The Global Alliance would also like to acknowledge and thank the individuals involved in this project:

- AEBA: Prof. Donald Tan and Chai Li (Singapore)
- APABO: Dr Luciene Barbosa and Ana Maria Guimaraes Garcia (Brazil)
- EBAA: Brian Phillippy (USA)
- EBAANZ: Heather Machin (Australia)
- EEEA: Andrea Gareiss-Lok (Germany)
- IEBA: TBC

EVENTS

2015

January

16-17 EEBA Annual Meeting, Venice, Italy. www.europeaneyebanks.org

April

14 Global Alliance of Eye Bank Associations Scientific Meeting. San Diego, USA. www.gaeba.org
15-17 World Corneal Congress, San Diego, USA www.cornealsociety.org

June

3-6 EBAA Annual Meeting, Atlanta, USA www.restoresight.org

November

12-13 EBAA Fall Meeting/Scientific Symposium, Las Vegas, USA www.restoresight.org

2016

February


For all event information, please visit: http://www.gaeba.org/events/

Luc Noel Retires

It is with sadness that we farewell Dr Luc Noel as the Special Advisor to the Service Delivery and Safety Initiative for Medical Products of Human Origin Unit at the WHO. Dr Noel has retired from the position.

Dr Noel’s successor is Spain’s Dr José Ramon Nunez Peña who is the Transplant Coordinator at Hospital Clinic San Carlos, Faculty of Medicine, Compleness University of Madrid, and Medical Director of Transplant Donor Program and the World Health Organization (2012).

Share your story or event

The Global Alliance would like to share your stories, experiences and up-coming events with other members within your region and around the world.

Please submit your story or event by February 2015 for submission in the March 2015 edition

Email to: info@gaeba.org
Join Us At The...

GLOBAL ALLIANCE
OF EYE BANK ASSOCIATIONS

GAEBA SCIENTIFIC MEETING
Embassy Suites San Diego Bay
San Diego, CA, USA
14 April 2015
Immediately preceding World Cornea Congress

Developing Global Conversations in Eye Banking

www.gaeba.org

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