

GRATEFUL PATIENT ESTABLISHES FUND TO HELP OTHERS IN NEED

Thyroid eye disease takes its toll and many need surgery to resume their lives

A generous and grateful patient, who received treatment for thyroid eye disease (TED) at the Kellogg Eye Center, was moved by the stories of other patients—their daily struggles in facing the physical and emotional challenges of the disease, as well as the financial burden they incurred for treatment and travel.

The individual has made an anonymous gift of \$1.5 million to create a new fund, called TED Care, for patient support and research to advance understanding of the disease. His wish is that others can experience the same excellent care that he received, and his gift has already inspired others to contribute to the fund, including a donation from a longtime supporter, the Bell Charitable Foundation.

“As our donor knows well, TED presents multiple physical and emotional challenges to our patients. Once the most pronounced symptoms of TED have subsided, our patients want to get back to feeling like the person they were before the onset of the disease,” says oculoplastics surgeon Raymond S. Douglas, M.D., Ph.D., director of Kellogg’s Thyroid Eye Disease Center. “We are grateful for this gift, which will allow many more patients to have reconstructive surgery to help them move forward with their lives.”

Individuals with TED can experience symptoms that are painful and affect their appearance—bulging eyes, the well known “thyroid stare,” and redness and swelling of the eyelids. Blurred or double vision can also occur. When symptoms finally subside, these patients are likely to need orbital decompression surgery to remove scarring or fatty tissue that has accumulated in the eye’s orbit.

Such patients are now benefitting from advances in surgery, in particular, the minimally invasive surgeries practiced at the Kellogg Eye Center. Dr. Douglas, a leader in the field who has modified standard surgical practice for TED, says that today his patients require 1 to 2 surgeries as compared to 4 to 8 procedures just a few years ago.

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—Raymond Douglas, M.D., Ph.D.



Thyroid eye surgeons: Raymond Douglas, M.D., Ph.D., Shivani Gupta, M.D., M.P.H., and Alon Kahana, M.D., Ph.D.

Among other advances is a 3-D navigation system, introduced to Kellogg by oculoplastic surgeon Alon Kahana, M.D., Ph.D. The system is described as stereotactic, which refers to precise positioning in three-dimensional space. “These new-generation stereotactic navigational systems allow surgeons to visualize deep orbital anatomy in three dimensions during orbital decompression surgery, commonly performed for thyroid eye disease,” says Dr. Kahana, the Helmut F. Stern Career Development Professor. “Despite the initial learning curve, navigated orbital surgery is safer and faster, and provides for excellent outcomes through smaller incisions. Given the proximity of the eye, brain and other vital structures, it appears that stereotactic deep orbital surgery could become the new standard of care.”

These advanced systems are another mark of the customized approach provided by the Kellogg surgical team. “Our care for patients is personalized because the disease strikes each person in very different ways,” says Shivani Gupta, M.D., who assisted Dr. Douglas on the donor’s surgeries. “We always assess the severity of the disease, the impact of the disease for each patient, and the patient’s wishes,” she says.

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Patients who wish to apply for TED Care support may call 734.615.1472 or email UM-ThyroidEyeDisease@med.umich.edu. To make an appointment, please call 734.764.5106.