President’s Message

Dear OTSS Members,

Greetings and welcome to the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section (OTSS) winter newsletter! As 2019 closes, we are looking forward to celebrating the year 2020 – the year of perfect vision (though most people can be corrected to better than 20/20). The OTSS Executive Committee has been hard at work to bring some new programs, continuing the mission of the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section to promote exchange of information among academic, clinical and preclinical researchers in ocular toxicology.

In 2019 and 2020, the focus has been on organizing educational programs that emphasize new development and issues in ocular toxicology. At the 2019 SOT meeting in Baltimore, the OTSS sponsored a workshop entitled A Sharp Stick in the Eye: Understanding and Managing Ocular Findings in General Toxicology Studies, co-chaired by Drs. Evan Thackaberry and Vladimir Bantseev. During the summer, the OTSS partnered with the Medical Device/Combined Products Specialty Section (MD/CPSS) to sponsor a webinar, Biological Risk Assessments for Ocular Medical Devices, presented by Simona Bancos, PhD of the US FDA Center for Devices and Radiological Health. Not a group to rest on laurels, the OTSS successfully submitted a Continuing Education course Developing Therapeutics for Ocular Indications: A 20/20 View, which will be presented at the 2020 Annual SOT meeting in Anaheim, CA. While focused on those new individuals to the ocular arena, our esteemed speakers are presenting ocular toxicology concepts that are applicable in 2020. After reviewing the presentations, I can say that everyone will learn something new! Our presentation committee, chaired by Dr. Hiromi Hosako, has been gathering ideas for both webinar presentations as well as looking forward to presentations for the 2021 SOT meeting.

One of our constant challenges is to recruit graduate students and post-docs into the ranks of the OTSS – the issue being that ocular toxicology is not generally a standalone discipline at the graduate school level. Most of us have happened into the field from general toxicology or from the general ocular field– and stayed fascinated by the eye. One new endeavor to increase awareness of the field is that the OTSS/SOT will have a booth at the Annual Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) conference which will be held from May 2020 in Baltimore, MD. We will have a small booth on the exhibit floor. If you are attending the ARVO Conference, please stop by to say hello, introduce a colleague to the SOT/OTSS, or even volunteer to work the booth for a few hours.

Lastly, I’d like to recognize the OTSS executive, invaluable team in continuing the OTSS mission: To recap our highlights from earlier this year, we welcomed our new officers and post-doctoral and student representatives to the Executive Committee: Hiromi Hosako (Vice President), Qihong Huang (Vice President-Elect), Brenda Smith (Past President), Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), Vlad Bantseev (Communication), Denise Rodeheaver (Councilor), and Andrea Rodrigues (Councilor). This year, our Postdoctoral Representative, Dinesh Goswami, and Graduate Student Representative, Juliana Falero-Perez, both moved on to new endeavors in their careers and we wish them the best of success. Lastly, thank you to our members – and we encourage you to join the OTSS activities in 2020! - Kathleen Krenzer, OD, PhD, DABT

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OTSS Website

Officers

- President
  Kathleen Krenzer
- Vice President
  Hiromi Hosako
- Vice President-Elect
  Qihong Huang
- Secretary
  Neera Tewari-Singh
- Communications Officer
  Vladimir Bantseev
- Past President
  Brenda Smith
- Councilors
  Denise Rodeheaver
  Andrea Rodrigues
- Postdoctoral Representative
  Open
- Student Representative
  Open
2019 OTSS Reception Highlights

The reception for the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section was held on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Hilton Baltimore Key 8 conference room. It began by acknowledging the supporters of the OTSS which included: Charles River, Covance, Ocular Services On Demand (OSOD), Regeneron, Covance and Absorption Systems.

Introductions of the Current Officers of the OTSS and New Officers for the 2019-2020 term were announced by Dr. Brenda Smith. Kathleen Krenzer (President), Hiromi Hosako (Vice-President), Qihong Huang (Vice-President Elect), Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), Vlad Bantseev (Communication), Denise Rodeheaver and Andrea Rodrigues (Councilors), Dinesh Goswami as Postdoctoral Representative (now open), and Juliana Falero-Perez as Student Representative (now open). Brenda Smith serves as the Past-President for the 2019/2020 term. Officers completing their terms on the OTSS Executive Committee include: Mercedes Salvador-Silva (Past-President), Florence Lorget and Qihong Huang (Councilors) After introductions, the chairpersons of various OTSS committees presented updates.

Brenda Smith (Past President) receiving a plaque for her years of service as an OTSS officer. Presented by Qihong Huang
Kathleen Krenzer, Chair of the Program Planning Committee, updated on the activities organized and supported by the committee, including the 2019 Workshop “A Sharp Stick in the Eye: Understanding and Managing Ocular Findings in General Toxicology Studies.” to be presented Wednesday, March 13. The Symposium was endorsed by the Regulatory and Safety Evaluation Specialty Section. Additional updates included the joint webinar proposal co-hosted with the Medical Device and Combination Product Specialty Section intended to review the impact of the recent revision to ISO 10993-1 as it relates to ocular biocompatibility assessments and 2020 SOT Continuing Education Proposal: “20/20 – Vision for the future”.

The chairperson of the Communications Committee, Vlad Bantseev, introduced the OTSS members who helped support the committee. Of the various committee activities, the principal activities focused on the OTSS Newsletter, Websites and OTSS Poster for the annual meeting, which is always in need of information to share with the members of the OTSS.

An update on the Membership Committee, chaired by Dr. Hiromi Hosako was provided. At the time of the meeting, there were over 100 members of the OTSS. Of those members, 48% represent Pharma/Biotech, 19% represent CRO, 12% represent Consultant, 10% represent Academic and 6% represent Government, and 4% are others. This number has been steady for the past few years, but there is room for many more members, especially students and postdocs!

Next was an update on OTSS financials by Neera Tewari-Singh, which was followed by awards. Neera indicated that the OTSS was doing well financially, with a balance ending 31 Dec 2018 of $72,015, representing a net gain of $3,151 year-over-year.
Dr. Shoji Sasaki, as representative of the Japanese Society of Comparative and Veterinary Ophthalmology, provided an update highlighting action items of interest from 2019 to 2020 including: Terminology Integration, Spontaneous Data Collection, and an ERG Workshop. Dr. Sasaki updated us on the Japanese Society of Toxicology (JSOT) 3-Day training course 22-24 March 2019 in Tokyo which was to include group trainings of ophthalmologic examinations and 13 lectures.

The OTSS awards were announced (see headlines below). The reception was concluded by reminding those in attendance to sign up for committees and reach out to any of the 2019-2020 officers with any ideas or suggestions.

**Career Achievement Award: Dr. Masaaki Kurata**

At the annual 2019 OTSS reception, the “Career Achievement Award” presented by Dr. Shoji Sasaki to Dr. Masaaki Kurata. In receipt of his award, Dr. Kurata gave a presentation entitled “Measurement Data of Ocular Anatomy in Laboratory Animals.”

![Dr. Masaaki Kurata receiving the OTSS Career Achievement Award 2019.](image)

**2019 Francis & Taylor “Ocular Paper of the Year” Award**

The Francis & Taylor Award, “Ocular Paper of the Year,” is presented for the best paper in ocular toxicology published in the Journal of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology. At the 2019 OTSS Reception Dr. Wallace Hayes presented the 2019 Taylor & Francis “Ocular Paper of the Year” to Bardak H, Uğuz AC, Bardak Y. “Protective effects of melatonin and memantine in human retinal pigment epithelium (ARPE-19) cells against 2-ethylpyridine-induced oxidative stress: implications for age-related macular degeneration”. Cutan
Ocul Toxicol. 2018, 37:2, 112-120. The authors, who were not able to attend, were awarded with a plaque and a free subscription for a year to the Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology Journal.

Dr. Wallace Hayes acknowledged the collaboration from the OTSS Officers in helping to select the winner of this year’s award.
Workshop at the 2019 SOT
“A Sharp Stick in the Eye: Understanding and Managing Ocular Findings in General Toxicology Studies”

Chairpersons: Dr. Evan Thackaberry and Dr. Vlad Bantseev

This Workshop was hosted on Wednesday, March 13th and was Endorsed by the Regulatory and Safety Evaluation Specialty Section. **Abstract**: Unexpected ocular findings in general toxicology studies represent a unique challenge in pharmaceutical drug development. Eye lesions are uniquely monitorable in this setting, often using the same techniques that are applied in clinical studies. This allows for detailed assessment of the dose response and onset of lesions as well as their functional impact. However, understanding the specialized grading scales and imaging modalities is key to interpreting these data. Additionally, many tissues of the eye, particularly the retina, are terminally differentiated and unable to regenerate following toxic insult. This makes the detection, characterization, and mechanistic understanding of ocular lesions caused by novel therapeutics of vital importance for an assessment of human risk prior to clinical trials. The objective of this session will be to focus on adverse ocular findings on general toxicology studies for non-ophthalmology products. The first presentation will focus on the common ocular assessments used on these studies and frequently observed ocular lesions. This will be followed by three case studies in which unexpected ocular findings were observed on general toxicology studies, with a focus on the sponsor’s investigative and regulatory strategy to address these findings. Finally, a speaker from the US FDA will provide a perspective on regulatory expectations for therapies with adverse ocular effects.

Call for Nominations from the Awards Committee

Deadline: February 7, 2020

**Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section Covance-OSOD Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award**

Each year, OTSS recognizes outstanding student/postdoctoral candidates for their contribution to advancing the understanding of ocular toxicology and pharmacology. The award recipient will receive a certificate and monetary award of up to $500, funded by generous contributions from Covance and OSOD. The requirements/criteria for the award include that the Applicant:

1) must be graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the annual meeting;
2) preferred to be an SOT and OTSS member;
3) must have an accepted abstract at the next upcoming SOT annual meeting;
4) must attend the SOT meeting and attend the OTSS reception;
5) must not have received an OTSS award the previous year;
6) abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology.

**Submission of:**
1) Abstract, including SOT Abstract Number.
2) Letter of support from applicant’s Sponsor indicating the role of the applicant and independence in conducting the research.
3) Narrative describing their research hypothesis, background and significance (up to 2-pages). The winners will present a 5-minute synopsis of his/her research at the Annual OTSS meeting. Submit nominations to: Andrea Rodrigues (arodrigues@toxstrategies.com)

**Deadline: February 7, 2020**

### Ocular Toxicology SS Trainee Travel Award

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section (OTSS) is now accepting applications for a Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award. The purpose of these awards is to recognize outstanding contributions of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to the 2020 SOT Annual Meeting in the area of ocular toxicology. The award is specifically intended to support the travel of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to the Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology. Both need and abstract merit will be considered as criteria for this award.

Eligibility is limited to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who meet the following criteria:

1) must be graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the annual meeting;
2) must have an accepted abstract at the next upcoming SOT annual meeting;
3) must attend the SOT meeting and attend the OTSS reception;
4) must not have received the OTSS award the previous year;
5) abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology.

The application should include the following items:

1. Cover letter from the trainee indicating his/her intent to apply for this award and interest in attending the Annual Meeting
2. Current CV
3. Copy of abstract for platform or poster presentation at the 2020 SOT
4. Letter from advisor or mentor indicating the trainee’s merit, as well as confirmation of need for funding to enable travel

Awards will be conferred to one (1) graduate student and/or one (1) postdoctoral fellow. The winners will each receive an achievement plaque and a $500 cash award. The awardees will be acknowledged at the 2020 OTSS Reception.

All applications should be submitted to OTSS Awards Committee Chairperson Andrea Rodrigues (arodrigues@toxstrategies.com)

**Deadline: February 7, 2020**

### Ocular Toxicology SS Annual “Paper of the Year” Award

The Taylor & Francis Award is presented annually to recognize the best paper in ocular toxicology published in the Journal of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology. The winner receives a certificate of recognition and a subscription to the Journal of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology. The winner will be selected by Taylor & Francis from articles published between January 1 and December 31 of the year preceding the SOT Annual Meeting. Nominations from the membership will not be solicited. The award will be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section at the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting.

### Best Poster Award

Any poster accepted for presentation during the Ocular Toxicology Poster Session at the SOT Annual Meeting is eligible for the Best Poster Award. Nominees must attend the meeting and present the submitted poster. An abstract and a pdf file of the poster/slides must be submitted for consideration. The winning author(s) will receive a ribbon, certificate of recognition and an invitation to the OTSS reception held during the Annual Meeting.
Submit nominations to: Andrea Rodrigues (arodrigues@toxstrategies.com)
Deadline: February 17, 2020

Please note that the Career Achievement Award is now being awarded every other year, and we will take nominations for the next Career Achievement Award next year to be announced at the 2021 annual meeting.

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**OTSS Officer Nominations/Elections**

Support your Specialty Section by serving on the OTSS Executive Committee. Each year there is a call for Nominations. Please consider self-nominating or nominating a fellow OTSS member.

For the 2020/2021 term, the following positions will open: Councilor, Vice President-Elect, Communications, Treasurer, and Postdoctoral/Graduate Student Representative. See link below for a description of these officer positions and send nomination suggestions to Kathleen Krenzer (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com). See also https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/docs/Officer-Handbook-Duties-and-Responsibilities-2018-Final-Amendments.pdf

Voting occurs in February 2020, with induction of the new OTSS Executive Committee at the 2020 SOT meeting. Please keep an “eye” out for the email requesting your vote.