



President's Message

Dear OTSS Members,

Another great SOT Annual Meeting is now on the books. This year, I took advantage of much that SOT has to offer, including a continuing education course on Sunday, Chat with an Expert (CWAE) match on Monday, chairing a symposium on Tuesday, and walking the ToxExpo floors on Wednesday. Salt Lake City's venue and restaurants provided endless places to catch up with friends or attend a reception. I hope everyone who attended enjoyed the meeting as well.

Speaking of symposia, I am extremely proud that ocular toxicology was well highlighted throughout the meeting in various forms. On Sunday, one of the speakers at a CE course entitled "Nix the Six: Strategies for Implementing Nonanimal Acute Toxicity Testing" spoke about *in vitro* alternatives to Draize testing. On Monday, ocular researchers (many of whom are OTSS Members) presented their work in poster format followed by the OTSS Annual Reception on Monday evening. The OTSS Award recipients (or their designee) received their plaques, checks, and accolades, and we all got to witness the gorgeous SLC sunset at our in-person event. On Tuesday, "Taking a Closer Look at Biological Evaluations for Ocular Medical Devices and Combination Products" speakers Dr. Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Dr. Bailin Liang, and Dr. Simona Bancos presented a cutting-edge information session that was well-attended and went over time during the panel discussion (sorry to anyone that didn't get their questions answered). Finally, on Wednesday, the symposium "Through the Lens: Translational Insights in Ocular Toxicology" highlighted specific aspects of *in vivo* ocular examinations, histopathology processing, and microscopy readouts to better predict translatability of adversity in animal models to humans with visual impairment.

Lastly, I want to extend my extreme gratitude to our outgoing OTSS Executive Officers: Past President Vlad Bantseev, Treasurer Hiromi Hosako, Communications Officer Chris Schuetz, Senior Councilor Zhechu Peng, and Student Representative Jonathan Lin. It's committees like this that make the Presidential Chain fun, easy, and enjoyable. While it's the end of a great era, I am looking forward to working with our new officers who are taking on their roles in May 2024.

Please consider joining our Program Committee and following us on [LinkedIn](#)! On behalf of the entire OTSS Executive Board, thank you for your continued support.

Best Regards,

Andrea Rodrigues, PhD, DABT
OTSS President (2023-2024)

[OTSS Website](#)

2023-2024

Officers

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Andrea Rodrigues

Vice President

William (Bill) Cook

Vice President-Elect

Ling Huang

Treasurer

Hiromi Hosako

Communications Officer

Chris Schuetz

Past President

Vlad Bantseev

Councilors

Zhechu Peng
Yu-Quan Wen

Postdoctoral Representative

Open

Student

Representative
Jonathan Lin

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2024 Virtual Business Meeting

This year, the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section did something new, hosting the business meeting virtually on February 19th and saving the March 11th reception in Salt Lake City for social activities and the presenting of awards.


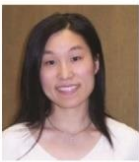








Supporters

The meeting began by acknowledging the generous supporters of the OTSS, which include Biomere, Greenfield Pathology Services, Labcorp, and Ocular Services on Demand (OSOD).

Officer Transitions

Introductions of the current Officers of the OTSS and new Officers for the 2024-2025 term were announced by Andrea Rodrigues. New officers are: William Cook (President), Ling Huang (Vice President), Neera Tewari-Singh (Vice President-Elect), Suvidha Menon (Treasurer), Ewa Budzynski (Communications), Napoleon Alejandro (Councilor), Jonathan Luisi (Postdoc Rep), and Ebenezar Okoyeocha (Student Rep). Yu-Quan Wen (Councilor) continued in his role. Officers completing their terms on the OTSS Executive Committee include: Vlad Bantseev (Past President), Hiromi Hosako (Treasurer), Chris Schuetz (Communications), Zhechu Peng (Councilor) and Jonathan Lin (Student Rep).

2024-2025 Officers

President	Vice President	Vice President-Elect	Treasurer	Communication	Councilor	Councilor	Past - President
							
William Cook Merck	Ling Huang Johnson & Johnson	Neera Tewari-Singh Michigan State University	Suvidha Menon AbbVie	Ewa Budzynski Akkeri	Yu-Quan Wen AbbVie	Napoleon Alejandro LabCorp	Andrea Rodrigues AbbVie
				Postdoc Rep	Student Rep		
							
				Jonathan Luisi Baylor College of Medicine	Ebenezar Okoyeocha Michigan State University		

Program Committee Update

The OTSS Program Committee has again been very active in planning and sponsoring ocular toxicology educational events on topics of interest to our membership this year. The Program Committee is currently composed of 19 OTSS members: Napoleon Alejandro, Vladimir Bantseev, Helen Booler, Ewa Budzynski, William Cook, Anh Diep, Swati Gupta, Ling Huang, Qihong Huang, Patrick Kerstein, Jonathan Lin, Jonathan Luisi, Zechu Peng, Andrea Rodrigues, Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Chris Schuetz, Neera Tewari-Singh, Yu-Quan Wen, and Krisha Yekkala. Anyone interested in joining the Committee can contact the Chairperson, William Cook, at william_o_cook@merck.com.

On January 16, 2024, OTSS sponsored a webinar entitled "[IPSC-Derived Retinal Pigment Epithelium Replacement Therapy for Macular Degeneration: From Bench to Bedside](#)" by Dr. Arvydas Maminishkis from NEI/NIH. This webinar was chaired by Ewa Budzynski and co-chaired (Q&A) by William Cook of the Program Committee. The webinar was very well attended with over 60 participants online, and the speaker did a wonderful job presenting the topic. The palpable interest in retinal cell therapy was enough that the Program Committee is considering it as a symposium topic for the 2026 SOT Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. The recording is on our website.

At the recent March, 2024 SOT Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT, OTSS sponsored an exciting symposium entitled "Taking a Closer Look at Biological Evaluations for Ocular Medical Devices and Combination Products" with Andrea Rodrigues serving as Chair and William Cook serving as Co-Chair. The symposium was well-attended, with over 100 SOT members in the audience, and there was a lively Q&A session after the presentations. The speakers and topics from this program were:

- An Eye on ISO 10993-17 and ISO 10993-18 and the Establishment of Allowable Limits and Safety Threshold for Leachable Substances for Consumables, Medical Devices, and Combination Products, Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Alcon
- Biocompatibility Assessment of Ophthalmic Medical Devices, Simona Bancos, US FDA
- Biocompatibility Strategy for New Drug-Medical Device Combination Products, Bailin Liang, J&J Vision

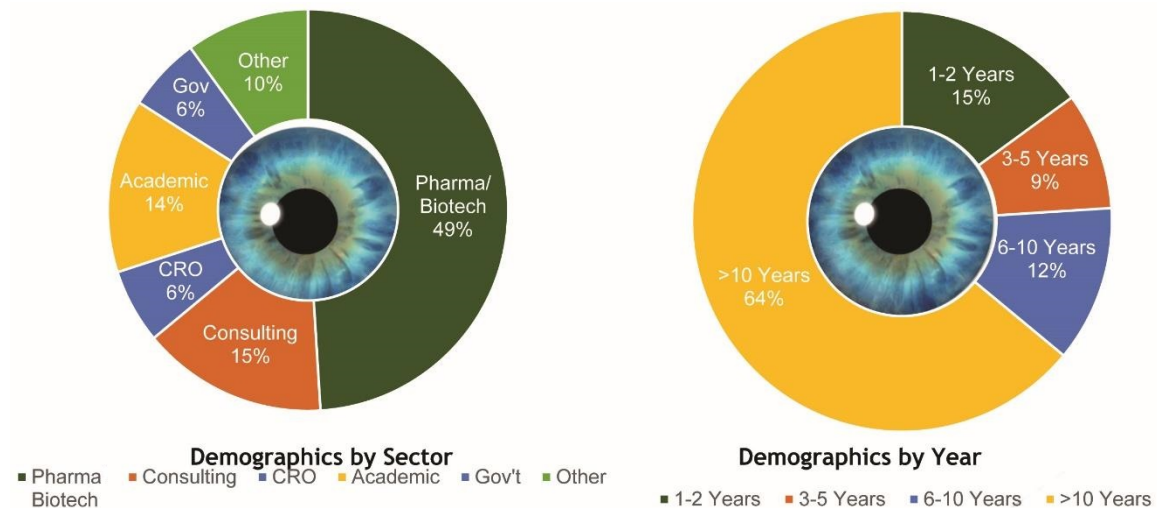
The Program Committee also worked hard preparing a webinar on non-human primate ocular drug development entitled "[General Considerations of Using Non-Human Primate in Non-Clinical Ocular Drug Research](#)." The speaker was Dr. Eric (Wankun) Xie, Director of Ophthalmology, at JOINN Laboratories, and the recording is also on our website. Future planned webinar topics include a comprehensive two-part webinar on ocular gene therapy and also a webinar on the use of minipigs in ocular drug development. Due to restrictions on the use of NHPs in drug development, the use of minipigs has become more of a consideration as a species in ocular drug development. For the 2025 SOT Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL, the Program Committee is actively preparing to submit a multi-speaker workshop proposal on standardized grading for ophthalmic examinations, including clinical ophthalmic, ERG, OCT, and pathology.

Communications, Membership, and Treasurer Update

The OTSS Executive Committee would like to encourage our members to join the [LinkedIn](#) group page that supports students/postdocs who are in the ocular toxicology field.

As of November 2023, OTSS has assets of \$87,650.

OTSS membership currently consists of approximately 80-90 members.



Update from Japanese Society of Comparative and Veterinary Ophthalmology

2023 42nd JSCVO Annual Conference (Aug. 26 and 27, Tokyo)

Special Lecture Dr. Takefumi Yamaguchi (Tokyo Dental College): Corneal opacity pathophysiology and treatment

46th JSCVO Fundamental Seminar

Dr. Kaoru Fujinami (Tokyo Medical Center): Inherited retinal diseases: From diagnosis to treatment; Dr. Toshihiko Matsuo (Okayama University Hospital): Photoelectric dye-based retinal prosthesis (OUREP) and drug candidate for the protection of photoreceptor cells

2023 47th JSCVO Fundamental Seminar (Dec. 16, Nagoya) Dr. Kazuichi Maruyama (Osaka Univ.): The Intraocular immune system and its association with the development of uveitis special program: Instructions on ophthalmologic examination flow and examination techniques for ocular toxicity assessment

Award Announcements

The OTSS Awards Committee was proud to announce our 2023-2024 OTSS award recipients at the virtual business meeting. They also wanted to extend their appreciation to our award sponsors. As usual, it was a very competitive year, and the committee extends its congratulations to all who participated.

Annual "Paper of the Year" Award by Taylor & Francis

Paper Title: Further Optimization of a Macromolecular Ocular Irritation Test (OptiSafe™)

Lead Author: Stewart Lebrun

Volume 42(1): 38-48. 2023

I² (Innovation and Impact) Award by Biomere

Paper Title: Ocular Irritation Reversibility Assessment of a Laundry Detergent Using the Porcine Corneal Opacity Reversibility Assay (PorCORA): A Focused Study

Lead Author: Puneet Vij

Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology 2023

OTSS Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Awards

Sana Iqbal, Graduate Student,
Loyola University Chicago

Ebenezar Okoyeocha, Graduate Student,
Michigan State University

OTSS Best Poster Award

Poster Title: Pb Exposure Decreases the Cell Density of Oligodendrocyte Precursor Cells and Oligodendrocytes in the Optic Nerve

Lead Author: Labony Khandokar

2024 SOT Annual Meeting

At this year's Annual Meeting, OTSS sponsored both the Ocular Toxicity poster session, and a well-attended symposium session, "Taking a Closer Look at Biological Evaluations for Ocular Medical Devices and Combination Products." The Executive Committee would like to thank our speakers Dr. Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Dr. Bailin Liang, and Dr. Simona Bancos for their interesting and informative talks.



Dr. Bailin Liang, Dr. Simona Bancos, Session Chairs Andrea Rodrigues and William Cook, and Dr. Mercedes Salvador-Silva

We were also fortunate to reconnect with many of our members at the Monday reception and recognize many of our award winners in person.



President Andrea Rodrigues kicks things off



Our Award winners (or their representatives)



The passing of the gavel to William Cook and many of our new officers for 2024

Call for 2024 Award Nominations

Deadline: December 31, 2024

Nominations are made through the SOT Apply system.

Link to award details: <https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/awards.asp>

1. I² Award (Innovation and Impact) Sponsored by Biomere
2. Labcorp-OSOD Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award
3. Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award Sponsored by Biomere
4. Ocular Toxicology Best Poster Award
5. Annual "Paper of the Year" Award

OTSS Member Suggestions

Please send an email to SOTHQ@toxicology.org, if you have any questions about the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section or call 703.438.3115.

Supporters

We sincerely thank you for your generous support!!

2023-2024 Supporters





HELP US RECRUIT EMERGING TOXICOLOGISTS!

SOT ToxScholar Program

Goal: Increase awareness of toxicology as a science and as a career field

How: Toxicology and career presentations to primarily undergraduate academic audiences



We need YOU to be a ToxScholar.

More information: [ToxScholar Outreach](#)



Faculty United for Toxicology Undergraduate Recruitment and Education (FUTURE) Committee

Thank You!