Dear OTSS Members,

Greetings and welcome to this Summer 2022 edition of the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section (OTSS) newsletter. It is truly my pleasure and honor to serve as your President this year and to work with incredibly talented and dedicated OTSS Board members.

A warm welcome to our new members and newly elected Board members for 2022–2023! I would like to personally welcome our new and returning Board members: Qihong Huang (past President/Councilor), Andrea Rodrigues (VP), William Cook (VP Elect), Ling Huang (Councilor), Zhechu Peng (Councilor), Hiromi Hosako (Treasurer), Chris Schuetz (Communication), and Jonathan Lin (Graduate Student Representative).

I would like to sincerely thank outgoing Board members, Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), Chris Steele (Communication), and in particular our past President, Qihong Huang, who has spent several years in the Presidential chain serving on the OTSS’s board. I am deeply sorry that I did not get a chance to thank our outgoing board members at the OTSS reception during the SOT meeting in March in person, because I attended the meeting remotely.

I want to express my gratitude for the continued service of this Board maintaining continuity and providing support to the OTSS throughout the year. The Board spends many hours throughout the year, and with that dedication we will continue to provide stellar support to our members, graduate students/postdocs to broaden the understanding of ocular drug development by participating in fantastic webinars and symposia, and to network at the reception during the annual SOT meeting!

It has been an interesting year already, and we are adjusting to the changing environment, particularly as it relates to the return of the in-person meetings and the past SOT hybrid in person/virtual meeting.

The OTSS continues to provide a variety of opportunities for their members.

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In 2022, the OTSS sponsored/organized not one but two scientific webinars: “Lighting in the vivarium: Spectrum and is Crucial. The Source is Not” presented by Doug Learn, Charles River-Horsham and “Regulatory Requirements for Ocular Biologics Development” presented by Maria Rivera, FDA. Recordings from those two webinars are available online at the OTSS website in case you missed them.

At the annual 2022 SOT meeting in San Diego, the OTSS also sponsored and organized two activities, a scientific symposium entitled “In vitro considerations for predicting retinal toxicities” and a member reception. At the reception, combined 2021-2022 awards were presented (because 2021 was only a virtual SOT meeting and virtual OTSS reception). For 2021, the winners were as following: OTSS Career Achievement Award: Brian Short, Taylor and Francis “Paper of the Year” Award: Neepa Choksi, OTSS I² (Innovation and Impact) Award: Neera Tewari-Singh, and OTSS Best Poster Award: Jonathan Lin. For 2022, the winner of the Taylor and Francis “Paper of the Year” Award was Haruna Tahara, the winner of I² (Innovation and Impact) was Marion Gordon, and the winner of the OTSS Best Poster Award was Rhamiya Mahendran.

The OTSS Board is extremely grateful for the significant support from our Sponsors/Supporters. Without their support we would not be able to continue with our scientific programs.

In closing, I encourage all of you to continue your involvement with the OTSS’s programs, by getting involved in various committees, submitting the nominations for the OTSS awards, and to provide feedback on any ideas you may have or ways we can continue to grow and improve.

On behalf of the Board, we look forward to serving you and your continued participation in 2022-2023.

Best wishes,

Vlad Bantseev, PhD
OTSS President
Supporters
The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section was once again able to meet in person at the SOT Annual Meeting in San Diego, holding their reception on the evening of March 30th. It began by acknowledging the supporters of the OTSS, which include Biomere, Charles River, Labcorp, Ocular Services On Demand (OSOD), Regeneron, and Absorption Systems.

Officer Transitions
Introductions of the Current Officers of the OTSS and New Officers for the 2022-2023 term were announced by Qihong Huang. New officers include: Vlad Bantseev (President), Andrea Rodrigues (Vice President), William Cook (Vice President-Elect), Hiromi Hosako (Treasurer), Chris Schuetz (Communications), Zhechu Peng (Councilor), and Jonathan Lin (Student Representative). Ling Huang continued in the role of Councilor. The Postdoctoral Representative position was not filled during the election, and it was encouraged that those who are qualified nominate for that position. Officers completing their terms on the OTSS Executive Committee include: Qihong Huang (Past-President), Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), and Chris Schuetz (Councilor). After the introduction, the chairpersons of various OTSS committees presented updates.
**Program Committee Update**

In the SOT Annual Meeting, OTSS sponsored the “In vitro considerations for predicting retinal toxicities” Symposium

- “Considerations for utilizing complex in vitro tools and in silico systems to predict retinal toxicity following ITV administration” Nardos Tassew, Genentech
- “Application of organotypic ocular perfusion to assess ITV drug toxicity and disposition” Jeremy Sivak, Krembil Research Institute, University Health Network
- “Retinal in vitro models for drug safety testing - challenges and opportunities” Stefan Kustermann, Roche
- “Application of human induced pluripotent stem cell- (hiPSC) derived retinal organoids for in vitro drug development: Limitations and opportunities” Valeria Chichagova, NewCells Biotech
- “In vitro to in vivo correlation of retinal toxicity utilizing primary human RPE cells: ITV of Acetyl Triethyl Citrate and Benzyl Benzoate in monkeys and rabbits as an example” Roxanne Andaya, Genentech

OTSS also sponsored two webinars in the first quarter of 2022

- “Lighting in the vivarium: Spectrum and is Crucial. The Source is Not” Doug Learn, Charles River-Horsham
- “Regulatory Requirements for Ocular Biologics Development” Maria Rivera, FDA

**Communications, Membership, and Treasurer Update**

The OTSS Executive Committee would like to encourage our members to join the LinkedIn group page ([https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13829631/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13829631/)) that supports students/post-docs who are in the ocular toxicology field. And remember, OTSS will waive membership fees in 2022 for current students and postdocs who are already members of SOT. To obtain a request form and for more information, please send an email to [Ocular.SOT@gmail.com](mailto:Ocular.SOT@gmail.com).

As of January 2022, OTSS has assets of $86,103.

OTSS membership currently consists of approximately 100 members.
Update from Japanese Society of Comparative and Veterinary Ophthalmology
The JSCVO announced their 2022 44th JSCVO Fundamental Seminar in 41st JSCVO Annual Conference (July, Online/F2F in Shizuoka), featuring the following speakers:

- Hiromi Hosako (Alcon, Former OTSS President): Title TBD (Lecture on OTSS activities and initiatives)
- Haruna Tahara (Senju Pharmaceutical, 2020 OTSS Award Winner): Title TBD (Lecture on ocular genotoxicity evaluation systems)

Award Announcements
The OTSS Awards Committee was proud to announce our 2021-2022 OTSS award recipients at the reception. They also wanted to extend their appreciation to Wallace Hayes of Taylor & Francis and Amy Descarreaux of Biomere for their award sponsorship. It was a very competitive year and the committee extends its congratulations to all who participated.

Ocular Toxicology Best Poster Award
Poster Title: The Validation of Immune Cells for Next Generation of Human In Vitro Ocular Models
Lead Author: Rhamiya Mahendran

Annual “Paper of the Year” Award by Taylor & Francis
Paper Title: Investigation of In Vivo Unscheduled DNA Synthesis in Rabbit Corneas Following Instillation of Genotoxic Agents
Lead Author: Haruna Tahara
Volume 40(1): 26-36. 2021

I² (Innovation and Impact) Award by Biomere
Paper Title: SM1997 Downregulates Mustard-Induced Enzymes That Disrupt Corneal Epithelial Attachment
Lead Author: Marion Gordon
Call for Award Nominations

Deadline: December 31, 2022
Submit all nominations to: Ling Huang and Zhechu Peng (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com)
Link to award details: https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/awards.asp

1. Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section Career Achievement Award

   Every other year, the OTSS recognizes a Senior Investigator for lifetime achievement or for contribution of a particularly influential body of work to the field of ocular toxicology. This award is for scientists in academia, industry, or those who have had an impact on regulation in the field. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

   Nominations of candidates not selected will be considered for two additional award cycles unless the nomination is withdrawn by the nominator.

   Nominations are encouraged with respect to any of the following criteria:

   1) Contribution to the field of ocular toxicology—depth and breadth of scientific contributions and significance of contributions for advancing the field

   2) Major influence in the education/training/mentorship of young scientists in the field of ocular toxicology including training in government, industry, or academia

   3) Leadership and service to the ocular toxicology field including involvement in the Specialty Section or other meetings/organizations related to ocular toxicology

   4) Influence on regulatory and risk/safety assessment decisions related to ocular toxicology

   The nominator (or himself/herself) should provide a discussion of the role that the candidate's work has played in any of the above 4 points. A curriculum vitae and bibliography should also be included. A letter of recommendation from another investigator in the field would be helpful.

   Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

   The winner will receive a certificate, monetary award of $1000 and will give a 10-minute presentation of their work at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

2. I² Award (Innovation and Impact) Sponsored by Biomere

   This award recognizes Innovations and/or scientific advances that Impact the field of ocular toxicology based on papers published (or in press) in any journal in the calendar year (January 1 through December 31) prior to the SOT Annual Meeting. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting. A single award will be conferred each year.

   Applicants for the award must be an author of the peer-reviewed paper and a member of the OTSS at the time they apply.

   The applicants shall submit a copy of the publication and a description or other documentation describing how the subject work is Innovative in ocular toxicology or Impacts the scientific advancement of ocular toxicology.
Submit nominations to: Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

The winner will receive a plaque and a monetary award of $1,000 to recognize their accomplishment at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

3. **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 will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

The requirements/criteria for the award include that the Applicant:

1) Must be a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the SOT Annual Meeting
2) Is preferred to be a SOT and OTSS member
3) Must have an submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting
4) His/her accepted abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology
5) Must attend the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting

The applicant should submit:

1) His/her submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the SOT Annual Meeting
2) A letter of support from trainee’s advisor or mentor 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)

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

The winner(s) will receive a certificate and monetary award of up to $500, funded by generous contributions from Covance and OSOD. The winner(s) will present a 5-minute synopsis of his/her research at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

4. **Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award**

Each year, OTSS recognizes outstanding student/postdoctoral candidates with the Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding contributions of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the area of ocular toxicology specifically to support attendance to the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

Criteria for the selection will be based on both the applicant’s need and merit.

The requirements/criteria for the award include that the Applicant:

1) Must be a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the SOT Annual Meeting
Annual Meeting
2) Must have a submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting
3) His/her abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology
4) Must attend the OTSS reception held during the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting

The application should submit:

1) A cover letter from the trainee indicating his/her intent to apply for this award and interest in attending the SOT Annual Meeting
2) Current CV
3) His/her submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the SOT Annual Meeting
4) A letter from trainee’s advisor or mentor indicating the trainee’s merit, as well as the confirmation of need for funding to enable travel

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

This award will be conferred to one (1) graduate student and/or one (1) postdoctoral fellow. The winner(s) will receive an achievement plaque and a monetary award of $500 at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

5. Ocular Toxicology Best Poster Award

Any poster accepted for presentation during the SOT Annual Meeting in the field of ocular toxicology are eligible for the Best Poster Award. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

Nominees must have a submitted and/or accepted poster for the upcoming SOT Annual meeting and attend the meeting to present the poster.

A submitted and/or accepted abstract and a pdf file of the poster must be submitted for consideration.

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

The winning author(s) will receive a ribbon for the poster. The winning author(s) will also receive a certificate of recognition at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

6. Annual “Paper of the Year” Award

In addition to the above awards, our Annual "Paper of the Year" Award will be selected by Taylor & Francis from articles published in the Journal of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology between 01 January and 31 December of the year preceding the SOT annual meeting. No nominations from our members will be solicited for this award.
OTSS Member Suggestions
Please feel free to contact OTSS (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com) for any suggestions, ideas, or needs at any time!

Supporters
We sincerely thank you for your generous support!!

2021-2022 Supporters

[Logos of sponsors: Labcorp, OCSOD, Charles River, Regeneron, Biomere, Absorption Systems]