

Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section

ANNUAL REPORT: 2025–2026

May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026

I. Officers:

<u>2025–2026</u>	<u>2026–2027</u>
President: Ling Huang Vice President: Neera Tewari-Singh Vice President Elect: Yu-Quan Wen Past President, Councilor: William Cook Treasurer: Suvidha Menon Councilor: Napoleon Alejandro Councilor: Gayathri Chadalapaka Communications Officer: Ewa Budzynski Postdoctoral Representative: Jonathan Luisi Graduate Student Representative: Oluchukwu Okoyeocha	President: Neera Tewari-Singh Vice President: Yu-Quan Wen Vice President-Elect: Ewa Budzynski Treasurer: Puneet Vij Past President, Councilor: Ling Huang Councilor: Gayathri Chadalapaka Councilor: Bibiana Iglesias Communications Officer: Helen Booler Postdoctoral Representative: Jose Jimenez Chavez Graduate Student Representative: Emily Krupa

Committees:

No appointed committees

II. 2026 Membership total: 97

III. Key Outcomes and Accomplishments in 2025–2026:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section accomplished the following activities throughout the year.

- In-person meeting/mixer
- Sponsored session(s) at the Annual Meeting
- Endorsed session(s) at the Annual Meeting
- Poster session for trainees
- Trainee awards conferred
- Scientist investigator awards conferred
- Paper of the year award
- Newsletter(s)
- Webinars
- Business meeting (communicated operations/finances to members)

IV. Collaborative Partnerships with Other SOT Organizations:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section collaborated with the following organizations within SOT.

V. Communication Methods:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section stayed in contact with its members throughout the year through the following mechanisms.

- Emails through SOT Headquarters
- Specialty Section website
- Newsletter(s)
- Through Graduate Student/Postdoc Representatives
- LinkedIn

VI. Promotion of Inclusivity

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section maintained an inclusive organization through the following activities.

- Nominate a diverse slate of candidates for elections
- Solicit equitable input from all executive committee leaders
- Utilize virtual meetings for convening Specialty Section leadership
- Utilize standardized rubrics for judging awards/posters
- Include inclusive descriptions of Awards
- Prioritize diversity in selection of speakers/panelists
- Waive fees for meetings or membership due to financial hardship
- Highlight trainee research
- Solicit member feedback for development of Specialty Section activities (such as webinar topics)
- Provide volunteer activities for the membership to be engaged
- Use multiple approaches to communicate with membership

VII. Mentoring and Career Development Activities:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section hosted the following mentoring activities throughout the year for its membership.

- Career panel(s)
- Networking luncheon/reception

VIII. Awards Given:

Trainee	3
Early Career	3
Mid Career	0
Late Career	1

IX. Key Outcomes and Improvements:

- Program Committee was much more active this year, and had more members
- Virtual meeting prior to SOT
- LinkedIn page had more followers and we added more events

X. Strategic Plan:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section supported the following SOT Strategic Priorities.

- Proactively pursue impactful scientific content
- Support the development and application of tools that advance toxicology
- Effectively communicate scientific advances
- Develop a talent pool of toxicologists for the future

- Provide training and education that reflects the needs of members
- Provide mentoring and networking opportunities for all career levels
- Enhance member recognition and visibility at all levels

XI. Scientific Topics of Interest:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section is interested in seeing the following topic areas developed into sessions at future SOT Annual Meetings.

- The OTSS plans to organize educational courses, scientific sessions, and webinars focusing on four key pillars: ocular drug development, ocular toxicity risk mitigation for systemically administered therapeutics, impurity risk assessment, and NAMs applications. These programs will integrate emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and advanced imaging while uniting experts from both industry and academia.
- Drug development for the ocular therapeutic area, including small molecule, large molecule, and advanced therapeutic modalities such as cell and gene therapy.
- Ocular Toxicity manifestation and risk mitigation related to systemically administered therapeutics for non-ocular therapeutic areas.
- Ocular toxicology risk assessment associated with impurities in drugs and medical devices
- NAMs Integration: Using in silico, in vitro, organoids, and alternative species for ocular risk assessment. Collaboration & Growth
- Industry and Academia: Uniting both sectors to share knowledge and build stronger partnerships.
- Emerging Tech: Showcasing artificial intelligence, advanced imaging, and new testing methods.

XII. Feedback to the Society:

- A. What is the one thing the Society should be doing that it currently does not do (or does not do effectively) that would be of importance/benefit to the members of the Specialty Section?

SOT could significantly benefit from creating more opportunities to introduce and promote our Specialty Sections beyond just poster sessions. This includes fostering collaborations across different subspecialties to attract members interested in expanding their knowledge across the Society. Additionally, increased coordination of mentoring activities, establishing a framework for cross-specialty group sharing, and providing easy opt-in participation options would encourage more engagement. Recognizing that some Specialty Sections may not have enough trainees to organize activities independently, we're actively exploring ways to support these efforts and enhance overall member involvement and cross-disciplinary learning.

- B. What is the one thing the Society is currently doing that impacts the Specialty Section that should be changed (e.g., stopped, modified, etc.)?

Investing the Section funds for better interest rates. SOT could improve how it supports our Specialty Section by providing targeted training on how we can work together to generate funding and request sponsorships for our awards. For example, offering education on setting up endowment funds and other funding mechanisms would empower our section to secure

additional resources and strengthen our programs. This kind of support could make a meaningful impact on our ability to recognize achievements and sustain our initiatives. The process for approval of proposals for sessions and workshops seems cumbersome.