

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST DIABETIC EYE DISEASE



Raise your hand if you know someone with diabetes (patients don't count). With more than 21.0 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes,¹ chances are your hand is raised right now. With approximately 1.4 million

Americans newly diagnosed with diabetes every year, we have our work cut out for us.

Now, we know that November is American Diabetes Month, but it's not like we treat patients with diabetes only one month out of the year. For March we are putting diabetes, or, more specifically, diabetic eye disease, in the spotlight.

This issue includes an overview of efforts being made to understand, detect, and treat diabetic eye disease. To broaden our understanding of the roots of the disease, "An Update on the Genetics of Diabetic Retinopathy" by Michael Owyong, BS; Stephen G. Schwartz, MD, MBA; and Ingrid U. Scott, MD, MPH (page 43) summarizes some of the many studies looking for associations between genetic polymorphisms and diabetic retinopathy (DR).

Other articles in the issue focus on detecting and assessing diabetic eye disease. Peter A. Karth, MD, MBA, and Ehsan Rahimy, MD, question whether use of a deep learning algorithm for automated detection of DR and diabetic macular edema (DME) could address an unmet need. Turn to page 54 for their article, "Is Automated Interpretation of DR Images in Our Future?" In "A Role for OCTA in Daily Retina Practice," Kyle Green BS; Tony Succar, MScMed(OphthSc), PhD; and Amir H. Kashani, MD, PhD, discuss how optical coherence tomography angiography could be useful in detecting milder stages of DR when fluorescein angiography is not indicated or useful (page 56).

Two additional articles concentrate on treatment of diabetic eye disease. "Surgical Approaches to Managing PDR," by Scott Walter, MD, and Tamer H. Mahmoud, MD, addresses the role of surgery in the management of proliferative DR (page 49). Included in their discussion is an explanation of when surgery is indicated, why preplanning is important, and what it entails. Caesar F. Luo, MD, and Melissa D. Neuwelt, MD, bring the cover focus to a close with their article "Exploring Two Photocoagulation Modes for DME" on page 62. In it, they discuss a novel photocoagulator that can operate in both continuous wave and subthreshold laser modes.

Alanis Morissette warned that, "What it all boils down to is that no one's really got it figured out just yet." This may be true, but I think we can also agree with her that "everything's going to be quite alright." How do we know? Because we are not navigating this life with one hand in our pockets. Retina specialists use both their hands to deftly maneuver small-gauge instruments while performing precision surgery or to steady a patient while delivering an intravitreal injection. Our patients' vision depends on it.

No, Ms. Morissette, we may not have it all figured out, but by participating in clinical trials, by working together, and by working with industry, we are making strides in detecting, preventing, and treating diabetic eye disease—and other retinal disorders—that affect our patients. That's nothing to scoff at. ■

Allen C. Ho, MD,
Chief Medical Editor

Robert L. Avery, MD,
Associate Medical Editor

1. American Diabetes Association. Statistics about diabetes. www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/?loc=db-slabnav. December 12, 2016. Accessed March 6, 2017.