

## “OPERATION BOLLYWOOD”

Mr. Nikhil Kaushik

Dr Shetty, President of Cardiff Medical Society, introduced Mr Kaushik and welcomed him to Cardiff. Mr Kaushik is a Consultant Ophthalmologist at Wrexham Maelor Hospital but is also well known as a film producer and journalist. He is a member of the association of broadcasting doctors.

Mr Kaushik gave a very interesting talk relating to both his day to day work as an Ophthalmologist and also his success as a film producer.

He firstly raised our awareness of the scale of visual loss in the world and of the importance of age related macular degeneration (AMD). 45 million of the world population suffer from blindness, 135 million suffer from low vision (90% of these live in developing countries). 80% of worldwide blindness is avoidable. We were encouraged to be AMD aware. Macular drusen is formed with increasing age and can cause gradually worsening vision, with distorted images. It affects central vision, sparing the peripheral vision. Sometimes there can be new blood vessel formation and haemorrhages. It is important to identify the problem and prevent worsening. Regular eye examinations and early detection is important. With dry AMD it is important to modify risk factors such as smoking. Wet AMD is more serious and may need treatment such as laser photocoagulation, photodynamic therapy or drugs – in the form anti vascular endothelial growth factor such as Lucentis and Avastin. Lucentis is licensed for AMD and costs over £760 per injection. Avastin costs only £100 per injection but is used off label on named patient basis only. Mr Kaushik spoke of his delight that NICE had now approved drug treatment and that sight will be saved as a result.

Mr Kaushik spoke of how he had graduated in Delhi and came to the UK in 1977. His main training in Ophthalmology had been in Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. In addition to his medical career, he has worked in broadcasting – and worked for the BBC whilst in Manchester. Having moved from India to the UK himself, Mr Kaushik spoke of how the way of living was different in both countries. In 2007, 4000 foreign staff joined the NHS. He felt that the issue of medical migration would make a good feature film and set about writing a script for the film.

He went to Bollywood to explore the possibility of producing the film but was disappointed to find that it would cost a minimum of £250,000 so did not pursue his dream at that time. He described how in 2005/2006 he had a bonus after doing additional work as part of a waiting list initiative. He decided to use his

bonus to fulfil his dream of producing the film that he had already written the script for. He did not have the £250,000 needed for Bollywood but decided to produce the film on a lower budget in the UK, using “real people”. Saeed Jeffrey made a cameo appearance in the film but most of the cast were staff that worked with Mr Kaushik, not professional actors. The film “Bhavishya – The Future” depicted the life of Indian Doctors in the UK and looked at family and social issues and medical migration. The film was a huge success and Mr Kaushik showed clips from the BBC and ITV news reporting on its launch. It had good reviews in magazines, newspapers and the BMJ and also provoked an article in GMC today on medical migration.

Mr Kaushik amazed the audience with his drive and enthusiasm and it was clear that he and his staff had worked extremely hard in their spare time to produce such a successful film.