# E-Newsletter - September 2021

## Information and Support events

We continue with our series of free-to-attend webinars, information evenings and local peer support groups for the autumn. All of these online events will be hosted on Zoom, which can be accessed from your computer, laptop, tablet, mobile device or telephone. We do hope you will join us.

### Webinar: Inflammation and retinal degeneration in retinitis pigmentosa: Can lessons learned in the lab help us identify treatments in the clinic?

23 September 7.00pm - 8.00pm

Roly Megaw is a clinician scientist. He is a Wellcome Trust funded clinical lecturer at the MRC Human Genetics Unit at the University of Edinburgh and a consultant ophthalmologist in NHS Lothian. Roly undertook his PhD with Charles ffrench-Constant at the Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine, using induced pluripotent stem cells to model x-linked retinitis pigmentosa, prior to undertaking his clinical fellowship with Graeme Black in Manchester.

Roly now runs the inherited retinal dystrophy (IRD) service in Edinburgh, allowing him to combine his clinical and research interests. He uses human stem cell and animal models to better understand the mechanisms underlying genetic eye disease in an attempt to identify new treatments.

For his Retina UK seminar, Roly will talk about the role inflammation plays in retinitis pigmentosa, its resulting complications and how this has informed some recent work in the lab. He will give an overview of these recent findings in his lab and explain how it could be an avenue to identifying novel therapies.

[Find out more and register for the event](https://retinauk.org.uk/information-support/retina-uk-events/webinar-roly-megaw/)

### Webinar: Michael Gilhooley, Optogenetics

Wednesday 27 October, 7.00pm – 8.00pm

Michael Gilhooley is a clinical lecturer in the department of Genetics, Institute of Ophthalmology University College London and Moorfields Eye Hospital. His research interests include the development of novel therapies for inherited retinal degenerations (optogenetics) and inherited optic neuropathies.

This session will introduce the technique of optogenetics and its potential for development into a treatment for IRDs. Optogenetics is the process of expressing light sensitive proteins in cells, such as these surviving cells in the retina, to allow them to react to light independently. It has recently been used for the first time to return some vision to a patient with IRD in Paris as reported in the BBC News (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-57226572>).

[Find out more and register for the event](https://retinauk.org.uk/information-support/retina-uk-events/webinar-michael-gilhooley/)

### Information evening (online): Northern Ireland

29 September 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Join us for a evening of presentations from some of Northern Ireland's top Medical, Ophthalmic and Healthcare professionals.

Presentations will cover:

* Updates on genotyping in IRDs in both adults and children
* Inheritance patterns
* Unlock Genetics
* Navigating towns and cities when living with sight loss

[Find out more and register for the event](http://www.RetinaUK.org.uk/information-support/retina-uk-events/online-info-day-ni/)

### Information evening (online): Wales

13 October 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Join us for an evening of presentations from some of Wales’ top Medical, Ophthalmic and Healthcare professionals.

Presentations will cover:

* Patterns of inheritance and genetic counselling - especially relevant to IRDs
* Summary of IRDs, genes and overview of current IRD gene therapy and treatment trials
* Clinical Outcomes Group - How are we going to find new treatments for rare diseases such as IRD?
* Technology overview with Sight and Sound

[Find out more and register for the event](https://retinauk.org.uk/information-support/retina-uk-events/online-information-evening-wales/)

## Local Peer Support Groups

Our local peer support groups are continuing online with the next meetings scheduled for:

West Midlands - **Wednesday 22 September** 7.00pm - 8.00pm. There will be a presentation from Zoe Bates, an Employment and Benefits advisor for Sense. Zoe is visually impaired herself and a guide dog user. Zoe’s presentation will cover skills for employment, whether you are seeking employment or already employed, and what benefits are available to people with disabilities.

London - **Saturday 25 September** 11.00am - 1.00pm. Join us to learn more about managing with sight loss sessions, the different topics covered and hear from some participants about their experience.

More information is available on our website: [www.RetinaUK.org.uk/groups](http://www.RetinaUK.org.uk/groups).

## The impact we made in 2020

Our Impact Report 2020 is now available to download:

* [Impact Report PDF](https://retinauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/RetinaUK-Impact-Report-20-LRES.pdf)
* [Impact Report Word](https://retinauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/RetinaUK-Impact-Report-2020.docx)
* [Impact Report audio](https://anchor.fm/retina-uk/episodes/The-difference-we-made-in-2020-e15p4jg)

If you would prefer to receive a hard copy of the report or the audio on CD or memory stick, please email info@RetinaUK.org.uk or phone 01280 821334.

Call our Helpline 0300 111 4000 or email helpline@RetinaUK.org.uk

Monday to Friday 9.30am - 9.30pm

An audio version of this newsletter is available on our website: [www.RetinaUK.org.uk/publications](http://www.RetinaUK.org.uk/publications)