



New Clinic on Inherited Retinal Diseases: Expanding to meet needs for New Mexicans

There is now new hope for New Mexicans with rare inherited retinal diseases (IRDs) such as retinitis pigmentosa or RP. **Dr. Joaquin Tosi, MD** who did his research fellowship training in Ophthalmic Genetics at Columbia University, New York, brings his expertise on inherited retinal diseases to UNM. Retinal degenerative diseases including RP and dry macular degeneration affect more than 9 million Americans. These diseases represent the best model for studying neurodegeneration as the retina is accessible to experimental manipulations and imaging. Dr. Tosi assumed the position of Director, Retina Service starting September 1, 2016. The UNM is the only center in the whole state for care of such patients.

Born in the family of ophthalmologists in Argentina, Dr. Tosi received his medical degree at the National University of La Plata School of Medicine, became the Chief Resident in ophthalmology and did a retina fellowship for two years at University of Buenos Aires. After working in private practice for 3 years with his family, he moved to USA to pursue his dream to become a clinician-scientist.

In 2006, Dr. Tosi joined Dr. Stephen Tsang's laboratory research team at Columbia University, and was involved in research on gene therapy for retinal degeneration-associated diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa. During this period, he got trained in diagnosis and treatment of inherited retinal diseases, and electrophysiology. In 2009, he received the Doblí Srinivasan Award for the best clinical research paper during the annual Residents – Fellows Research Day.

Dr. Tosi then moved to Detroit where he did his ophthalmology residency at Kresge Eye Institute, and completed a fellowship in vitreo-retinal surgery under the guidance of Dr. Gary Abrams, a legendary figure in the field of vitreoretinal surgery. His training included

management of complex retinal detachment and diabetic tractional retinal detachment cases.

It was Dr. Robert Frank, a leader in the field of diabetic retinopathy research who persuaded him to come to the Land of Enchantment where he could bring his unique expertise to the Southwest. "I decided to create an impact by providing quality care in areas that have scarcity of retina specialists," remarks Dr. Tosi. Dr. Frank happens to be the mentor of another faculty member, Dr. Arup Das who spent his three years of post-doctoral research time in Frank's lab to learn about molecular mechanisms of diabetic retinopathy and novel pharmacotherapies.

There has been a long time demand in New Mexico for a retina specialist with expertise and knowledge in the field of inherited retinal diseases. Till now, patients with this kind diagnosis used to go to the neighboring states such as Arizona and California for treatment. As part of this endeavor. Dr. Tosi is collaborating with Dr. Sitko, Chief of the Electrophysiology Lab in studying these complex cases. Dr. Tosi has started to examine, categorize and perform genetic testing on



Joaquin Tosi, MD
Assistant Professor

patients with retinal dystrophies in order to offer the emerging therapies that are becoming available in this field.

Dr. Tosi enjoys providing care to the large New Mexican population who present a challenging array of retinal diseases. "My goal is to provide high quality retina care to all New Mexicans", comments Dr. Tosi.

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