

## Sri Ramachandra Institute Triumphs in 19th Fujio Cup Quiz at NCRM NICHE 2024 International Regenerative Medicine Conference

### *Groundbreaking Research on Gut Microbiome in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and Stem cell therapies for Cornea presented*

20th October 2024: **Zainab Shabbir Rasheed and Saiganesh Venkatesan** from **Sri Ramachandra Institute for Higher Education and Research, India**, emerged as champions, while their peers, **Sai Renuka C and Sanjana Ram**, claimed the runner-up position in the 19th edition of the Fujio Cup Quiz (FCQ) on Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine. This historic win marks the first time that both the winning and runner-up teams hail from the same institute. Teams from Rajalakshmi Engineering College and Ramaiah Institute of Technology, India, who also made it to the finals, join the prestigious group of FCQ Elites, a title reserved for the top finalists of this renowned global competition in Regenerative Medicine (RM).

**NCRM NICH E 2024**  
XIX Fujio Cup Quiz | Inter Disciplinary Conclave  
20, October (Sun), 2024

**XIX FCQ 2024 - WINNERS**  
**Zainab Shabbir Rasheed & Saiganesh Venkatesan,**  
*Sri Ramachandra Institute for Higher Education and Research, India.*

**XIX FCQ 2024 - RUNNERS**  
**Sai Renuka C & Sanjana Ram,**  
*Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, India.*

日印再生医療センター年次大会；2006年から毎年十月  
An Inaugural Commemorative Event of NCRM every October, since 2006  
Between 2006~2023, In 18 Yrs, graced by scholars of 186 Institutes from 22 Nations

In academic partnership with  
German Society for Stem Cell Research (GSZ),  
Training Program in Regenerative Medicine (TPRM),  
An initiative of University of Toronto, Canada

The Fujio Cup Quiz (FCQ)—launched in 2006 as part of NCRM NICHE—is a cornerstone event for promoting knowledge and research in RM. This year's quiz was held as part of the NCRM NICHE 2024, the annual event commemorating the inauguration of Nichi-In Centre for Regenerative Medicine (NCRM). Having evolved from its original location in India, then moving on to being held in Japan till 2019, the event is now hosted virtually, maintaining its reputation as a platform that sparks novel ideas and collaborations. These efforts have led to significant advancements in cell therapy, including the **BEES-HAUS (Buccal Epithelium Expanded and Encapsulated in Scaffold-Hybrid Approach to Urethral Stricture)**. Following

successful proof-of-concept animal studies, the BEES-HAUS is slated for human clinical trials under the leadership of Dr. Akio Horiguchi at Edogawa Hospital, Japan.

In the Plenary lecture, **Prof. Dr. Sajjad Ahmad from the Institute of Ophthalmology, University College London**, shared the pioneering results of their clinical trials in allogenic corneal limbal stem cell transplantation. He revealed that this treatment for regeneration of damaged corneal epithelium is now available in **Moorfields Eye Hospital** to patients who have had chemical burns in restoring their ocular surface integrity, supported by the NHS, UK. Additionally, **Dr. P. Parikumar from The Light Eye Hospital, Dharmapuri**, detailed their 16-year success story of corneal endothelial cell transplantation in patients with donor corneal graft failure, a fulfilling accomplishment towards “An Eye for Eyes” mission.

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**PLENARY LECTURE**

**Prof. Dr. Sajjad Ahmad**,  
*Institute of Ophthalmology, University College London.*  
Topic: Allogenic corneal Limbal stem cell transplantation.

**Dr. P. Parikumar, (Moderator)**  
*The Light and Light Ventures Limited, United Kingdom  
The Light Eye Hospital, Dharmapuri.*  
Topic: Corneal endothelial cell transplant in donor corneal graft-failure  
- A 16 year follow-up report.

**INTER-DISCIPLINARY CONCLAVE (IDC)**

**Dr. Fabio Arturo Iannotti**,  
*Institute of Biomolecular Chemistry, Naples, Italy.*  
Topic: Gut microbiome in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)

**Dr. K. Raghavan, (Moderator)**  
*Consultant paediatric Neurologist, JAICARE, Madurai, India.*  
Topic: Clinical trials of Neu REFIX B-Glucans in DMD with focus on Gut microbiome

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In the Inter-disciplinary Conclave (IDC), **Dr. Fabio Arturo Iannotti from the Institute of Biomolecular Chemistry, Naples, Italy**, presented on the role of the gut microbiome in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), while the clinical study data in DMD patients conducted by **Dr. Raghavan of JAICARE, Madurai, India**, using **Neu REFIX**, a novel beta-glucan food supplement targeting the gut microbiome in DMD patients, was presented by their collaborators. Now, Neu REFIX has received both Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) and Rare Pediatric Disease Designation (RPD) from the US FDA for the treatment of DMD and clinical trials are expected to start in the near future.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, NCRM NICHE 2025 will be conducted in October, 2025.

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