



## A Reflection from the Chief Executive Officer SJEHG

Ahmad Ma'ali PhD, MPH, BSN

It is a pleasure to be able to contribute to this edition of Knightly Topics. All of us at the Saint John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group welcome our special relationship with the Great Priory of Knights Templar of England and Wales and, especially, the commitment of Knights of the Province of London to supporting our work. Great Priory, as you will know, is the longest and most significant regular partner to the Eye Hospital Group after the Order of St John and those who visit us can see tangible reminders of this valued relationship.

Just before the pandemic struck, we were delighted to receive a visit from 40 Knights and spouses led by your now Provincial Prelate and we look forward to welcoming the next group of pilgrims in November this year.



We began 2021 with many uncertainties, not least those related to the global Covid pandemic. Based on our experience in 2020, we anticipated that our clinical work would be severely disrupted and that our overall output might only be at 70% of the hospital's capacity. However, following an immensely successful vaccination campaign in Israel a fourth wave of the virus was managed without the need for a severe lockdown or movement restrictions. The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group has continued to challenge itself on how best to support its patients – whether that be enhancing access to charitable eye care or freeing the backlog of surgical cases that we were unable to see during lockdown. I am delighted to report that we have managed to

operate on all those who were on our waiting lists and carried out more eye surgeries than ever before (**135,000 patients in total**).

We have resumed our outreach work both in the West Bank and Gaza. We have also established a regular outreach clinic at **Kofor Aqab village** which has enhanced access to eye care for Jerusalemites living outside the wall.



Last May, the war in Gaza was devastating for Gazans and many health facilities and houses were destroyed. Our hospital in Gaza has risen to the challenge to meet the increasing demand of so many people, and like our hospital in Jerusalem, in Gaza we supported more ophthalmic patients than ever before (**40,000 patients in total**).

This year we published ten clinical research papers in various ophthalmic and medical journals.

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*Ahmad Ma'ali*  
Chief Executive Officer SJEHG



One of three plaques within the St. John Eye Hospital thanking Knights Templar for their support



## A Reflection contd...

The work of the research team has been fully supported by the newly established Ophthalmic Research Advisory Committee, which is an integral part of the St. John Ophthalmic Association.

As for the coming year, we plan to strengthen our service provisions in Gaza to reduce the need for patients for travel to Jerusalem. The work with both the Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Health will also be enhanced to increase service provisions to all needy patients both in Jerusalem and West Bank.

Since the global pandemic struck, the Province of London, both collectively and through individual Preceptories and Knights, has raised in excess of **£20,000**. When the contribution of another **£20,000** from the Knights of the Vision Beautiful,

many of whom are London Knights is added, you can see why we value your support so much.

It is also wonderful to see so many of you wearing the Swift lapel pin and, if you do not already have one, there are details elsewhere in this edition of how to acquire one.

As always, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who support our work. Work which simply would not be possible without the magnificent generosity from friends like you, the Knights Templar of London.

With warmest regards

**Ahmad Ma'ali** PhD MPH BSN  
Chief Executive Officer SJEHG