



Young EVRS Column

## Dry lab – A future training method for young vitreoretinal surgeons

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Have you ever heard of 'Dry Lab'? I think most of the people knew what is 'Wet Lab' but not 'Dry Lab'. Traditionally, 'Wet Lab' involves with animal eyes and training is taught by on the spot with supervision. 'Wet Lab' was a successful training, it certainly have provided some degree of introductory experience to the youngster. However there are a few restrictions.

For instance, 'Wet Lab' is entitled dependent on the supply of animal eyes. No animal eye means no 'Wet Lab'. If the supply is good or surplus, 'Wet Lab' should not have any problem. What happens if there is an outbreak of animal diseases like CJD, Food and Mouth Disease, animal flu and others? 'Wet Lab' may not be able to function efficiently since the supply is not enough.

Secondly, the training centre for 'Wet Lab' may have a great distance from the source of supply e.g. farm. There is an extra expense on commuting.

Thirdly, the animal eyes may be preserved in the fridge. In some 'Wet Lab' centres, they inflate the eye ball prior to the teaching sessions. This will give some degree of works for the organising team.

Fourthly, the supply may not meet the demand. The amount of animal eyes may be insufficient to the participants, this problem can be targeted if the number of participants is restricted properly. Some centres buy an excessive amount to avoid this problem, but there is a possibility of wastage.

Fifthly, disposing the animal eyes may be a problem in some centre.

Sixthly, BSS solution, suture materials and instruments must be available.

Certainly there will be more foreseeable problems, 'Dry Lab' will handle all these problems nicely, not perfectly but in a better way. 'Dry Lab' involves a set of computer, software, a pair of 'operating' device and a food pedal. These are the basic equipments for 'Dry Lab' to work.

'Dry Lab' is independent of animal eye, BSS solution and other operative accessories. The organiser should be care free of the supply, preservation and disposition of animal eye, they also can control the amount of trainee by subjecting to the availability of computer, the trainee may experience similar degree of training with 'Dry Lab'.

Is 'Dry Lab' perfect? I could not say it is perfect, I could say it is better, nothing in this world is perfect. Some doctors may criticise that 'Dry Lab' may not give a 'real hand on' feeling as compare to 'Wet Lab'. Please be aware that 'Dry Lab' is targeted at the beginner level and 'Dry Lab' is still in its growing phase. If you are in the intermediate level, this means you have done some vitreoretinal surgeries, 'Dry Lab' may not be suitable for you. As the time goes by, 'Dry Lab' should be improved, it should be more 'realistic' in the future.

In 'Dry Lab', you are independent of animal eye, so the trainee has no worry of 'running out of supply'. The trainee can focus on the training nicely, at the end of one session, the feedback will be shown on the screen and the

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trainee will be aware of his mistake during or after the training. The trainee will have sufficient time for learning. However, this may annoy the next standby trainee if you have spent excessive time.

In short, you should try 'Dry Lab', please get back to us what you think.