



KEYNOTE

30 Years of Achievements in Low Vision Research

Gary S Rubin

*UCL Institute of Ophthalmology, London UK
Moorfields Eye Hospital, London UK*

Gary Rubin received his Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1983. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship in low vision in 1985, and then joined the faculty of the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins. In 1999, Gary moved to London, where he was appointed the Helen Keller Professor of Visual Rehabilitation at the Institute of Ophthalmology. His research interests include performance-based and patient-reported outcome measures for clinical trials, reading and face recognition in patients with low vision and clinical tests of visual function, including contrast sensitivity and microperimetry.

Keynote Lecture Outline

Just over 30 years ago the American Foundation for the Blind sponsored a meeting in Asilomar, CA on low vision rehabilitation. Arguably the first meeting of what was to become the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR) the Asilomar meeting brought together some of the leading low vision researchers from around the world. Asilomar was an isolated retreat on the California coast and for a young post-doctoral researcher it was an eye-opening experience. Low vision research was unfamiliar to most vision scientists and those who knew about it regarded it with suspicion – too clinical, too applied. It's been an uphill battle to shake those prejudices, but I would argue that we are building momentum as funding for basic vision research constricts and researchers discover the satisfaction of working on problems that make a difference to people's lives. I will take this opportunity to reflect on some of the successes of the past three decades of low vision research. These successes include advances in our understanding of the way the visual system works and the burden on the individual and society when it doesn't. Low vision research has provided a platform for the development of new outcome measures used in clinical trials of drugs and devices and techniques for ameliorating the impact of sight-threatening eye disease, and clinical trials of low vision rehabilitation are providing new insight into what works and what doesn't. I will conclude by highlighting some of the challenges that we still face and directions for low vision research for next three decades.