

## Two Years of Cruelty: Ophthalmological Training in a State of Emergency

Sibylle Scholtz<sup>1\*</sup>, Lee MacMorris<sup>1</sup> and Oksana Vitovska<sup>2</sup>

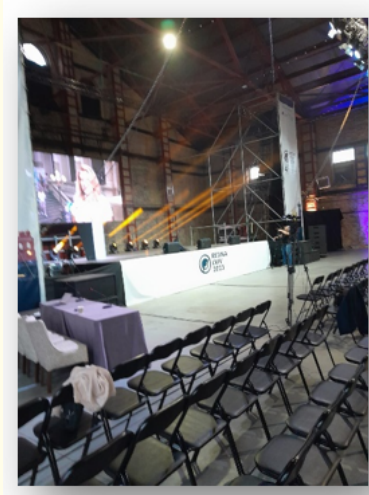
<sup>1</sup>Institute of Experimental Ophthalmology, Saarland University, Homburg/Saar, Germany

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Eye Clinic, Bogomolets University, Kyiv, Ukraine

**\*Corresponding Author:** Sibylle Scholtz, Institute of Experimental Ophthalmology, Saarland University, Homburg/Saar, Germany.

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Lviv is a city in Ukraine, near the Polish border. It is known for its rich culture, architecture and long history. On July 7 - 8, a conference of Ukrainian retina specialists, "Retina Lviv 2023", took place in Lviv. Two days before this congress, the Russian military attacked civilian areas of the city, killing at least ten people in a block of flats. Many, including children, suffered injuries and trauma. Despite these difficult circumstances, Ukrainian ophthalmologists met to share their knowledge and experience.



**Figure 1:** Despite this violent attack, Ukrainian and international ophthalmologists met for a unique congress in Lviv which, as a hybrid event, enabled participants and speakers to take part in the training.



**Figure 2:** The event was marked by lively discussions between highly qualified specialists. The large exhibition area enabled personal and emotional contact between representatives from clinics, practices, and industry.



**Figure 3:** Hybrid setting in the conference room.

The focus of this congress dealt with retinological topics. This year the organizer, Prof. Ihor Novytsky, broadened the range of the topics, which was reflected in the subtitle of the congress: "Vitreoretinal surgery and more". Accordingly, cataract surgery, IOL calculation and artificial intelligence were also reported and discussed.



**Figure 4:** fltr: Dr. Markiyany Novytskyy, Frank Krogmann, Prof. Oksana Vitovska, Dr. Tetyana Smal, Prof. Ihor Novytskyy.

A central topic of this congress were lectures on ophthalmological war injuries. Unfortunately, since 2014, Ukrainian ophthalmologists have had the most experience in this field, as they treat serious eye injuries on a daily basis. It is unfortunate that Ukrainian ophthalmologists have had to face trauma since 2014 due to the war. However, it also shows their strength and determination to use their knowledge and skills to help those in need and to share her experiences with other professionals.



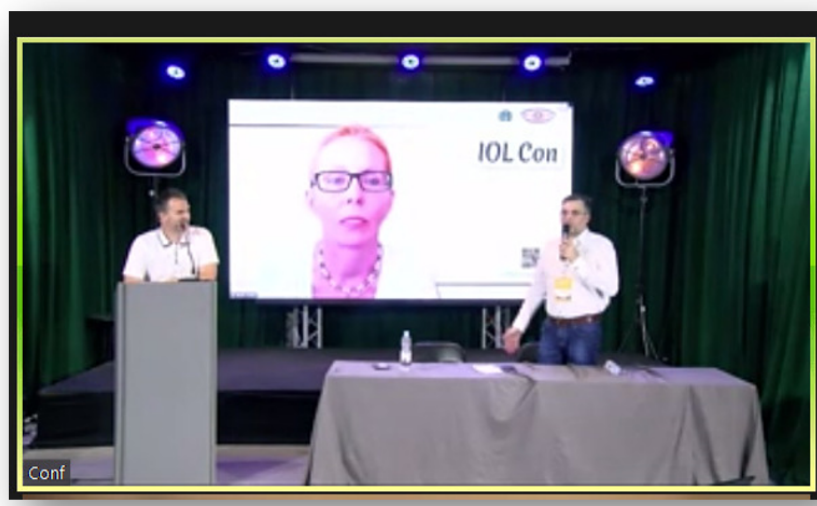
**Figure 5:** Fltr: Dr. Markiyany Novytsky, Prof. Ihor Novytsky, Prof. Oksana Vitovska, Frank Krogmann.

The presence of numerous international experts such as Dr. Ferenc Kuhn (USA), Prof. Camiel Boon (Netherlands), Dr. Sibylle Scholtz (D), Dr. Hassan Mortada (Egypt), Dr. Stratos Gotzaridis (Greece), Dr. Adam Cywinski (Poland), Prof. Horia T. Stanca (Romania) and many others show the commitment and solidarity of the international ophthalmological community.



**Figure 6:** Frank Krogmann (Germany) presenting on the history of retinal diseases.

It is particularly noteworthy that despite the war and the current attack on Lviv, Frank Krogmann came to Lviv from Germany and gave a vivid lecture on the history of retinal diseases.



**Figure 7:** Dr. Sibylle Scholtz (Germany) presenting on errors in biometry and IOL power calculation (Chair: Dr. Volodymyr Melnyk (left), Prof. Andriy Hudz (right)).

“Retina Lviv” was an important platform for professional exchange and support for Ukrainian ophthalmologists in a time of crisis. Such events help raise awareness of the impact of war on ophthalmology and help professionals develop better treatments and support for those suffering war trauma. More information about the congress can be found here: <https://www.retina-lviv.com/en.html>.

The next congress “RetinaLviv” will take place in the usual biennial rhythm in July 2025 - Slava Ukraini!

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