



Supporting Vision Researchers of Tomorrow



Our inaugural vision research competition, ‘Eye on the Cure presented by FYidoctors’, premiered on Saturday November 13th, 2021. In front of our three esteemed judges – Dr. Al Ulsifer, CEO and Chairman at FYidoctors, Dr. Michel Cayouette, Director, Cellular Neurobiology Research Unit at Montreal Clinical Research Institute and Tara James, Chair, Fighting Blindness Canada Board of Directors – early-stage vision researchers battled it out for \$100,000 in awards to support their research and advance their innovations.

“Now more than ever, it is so important to encourage and invest in the research of tomorrow. We are so excited to have the opportunity to spotlight and support these talented young researchers as they work to develop new diagnostics and treatments for vision loss.”

– Larissa Moniz PhD, Director of Research and Mission Programs

The Competitors



Jovi Wong, MD, MSc, DPhil

Ophthalmology resident, University of Toronto

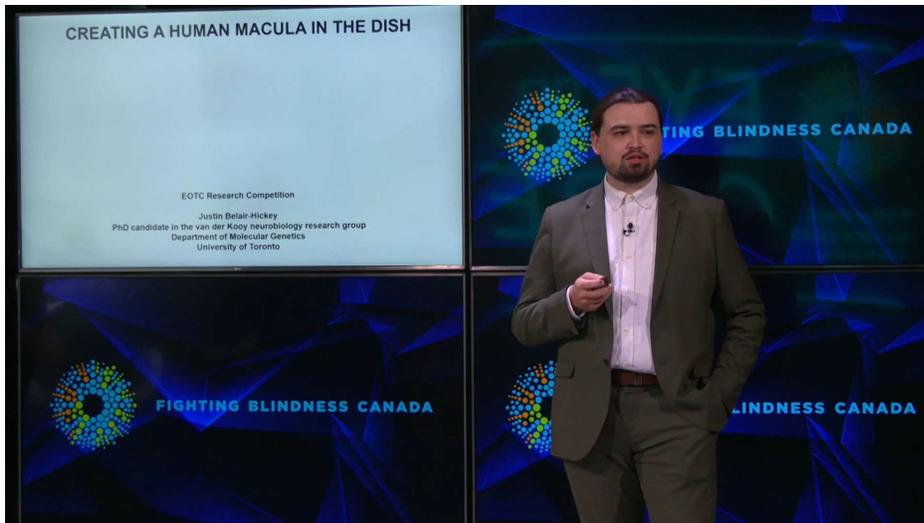
Jovi is trying to increase access to eye screening by developing an eye exam that can be done with your smartphone. Jovi is combining a smartphone fundoscope and artificial intelligence that could allow health care workers in rural, remote or underserved areas to more easily diagnose eye disease in order to prevent unnecessary vision loss.



Stephan Ong Tone, MDCM, PhD, FRCSC

Clinician Scientist, Assistant Professor, Sunnybrook Research Institute

Stephan is developing an innovative way to improve corneal transplantation. Stephan will be testing if vesicles gathered from placental cells can improve transplantation by reducing scarring and the risk of rejection.



Justin Belair-Hickey, PhD Candidate

PhD candidate, University of Toronto

Justin's research is trying to advance our understanding of stem cells and cell therapy for retinal degeneration. Justin is trying to recreate macular development in the laboratory with the hope that understanding this process will provide crucial knowledge that allows researchers to more efficiently produce cone photoreceptor cells for cell replacement therapy.



Etienne Benard-Seguin, MD

MD resident, University of Calgary

& Abdullah Al-Ani, MD-PhD Candidate

PhD candidate, University of Calgary

Etienne and Abdullah are trying to improve the diagnosis of optic neuritis allowing more accurate and quicker treatment. They are testing a new low-cost and accessible software based on artificial intelligence modelling. They hope this will lower costs, lead to more consistent and robust diagnosis and better outcomes for patients with optic neuritis.

The Winners

After much deliberation, our judges and academy members voted for Dr. Jovi Wong for the \$50,000 Researcher to Watch Award. Congratulations Jovi! [Watch Jovi accepting the award.](#)



The \$30,000 Heathbridge Capital People's Choice Award was voted on by over 200 audience members. After tallying up the votes, Dr. Stephan Ong Tone came out on top. Congratulations Stephan! [You can watch a recording of the live announcement on our Facebook page..](#)



Don't worry our remaining finalists didn't go home with empty handed! They were awarded \$10,000 Inspiration Awards, to help them kick-start their research projects.

Congratulations to all of our competitors! We are excited to see your progress as you move forward with your projects and help to advance the future of vision research.

Thank You

Thank you so much to everyone who supported us by purchasing tickets and donating funds for sight-saving research. **We raised over \$150,000 in support of FBC!** It is thanks to your donations that we are able to fund important research that could greatly impact the future of vision health.

As well, thank you to our amazing judges and academy members for attending the filming of Eye on the Cure and providing us with their industry knowledge and expertise.

We hope to hold this research competition again next year and we'll be sharing information about all our fundraising initiatives and events in FBC's monthly eNewsletter.

Thank you again to all of our supporters. It is thanks to YOU that we can continue the fight to end blindness once and for all.

[If you missed the event on November 13, you can still view the show and make a donation to Fighting Blindness Canada.](#)