Addenbrooke’s eye doctor wins innovation award

12 October 2012

Louise Allen was recognised in the MedTech category for ‘KidzEyez’, a novel visual field analyser for young children.

Visual testing in children enables early detection of eye and brain disorders, preventing blindness and enabling educational support. Current methods for assessing visual function in young children are old-fashioned and unsatisfactory. This innovation provides a better, more child-friendly way to address this need.

Paediatric ophthalmologists are expected to make management decisions regarding surgery/chemotherapy based on little accurate information. A clinical trial has confirmed the advantages of using ‘KidzEyez’ over currently available tests and it is hoped that it will become a regularly used and valuable tool in hospital clinics and, potentially, community services.

Awards were presented to winners by the TV presenter and broadcaster Maggie Philbin at a special NHS Innovation Awards Ceremony held on Wednesday 10 October at The Nucleus, Chesterford Research Park. Winners, where possible, will be supported by Health Enterprise East to progress their idea.

Louise Allen said: “I am delighted to win this award. It will help to raise the profile of KidzEyez as a new and much more accurate way for identifying visual field loss in children as young as one year of age. KidzEyez will enable us to detect visual problems caused by conditions such as brain tumours at an earlier stage and lead to vital intervention which can save the sight of young children.”
The 2012 competition was open to staff working in all branches of the NHS to put forward ideas for products and services which will benefit patients. This year it comprised five categories: Disease Prevention, Screening & Diagnosis; Surgical Disease Management; Therapeutic Disease Management; Long Term Disease Management and Care and MedTech.

Dr Anne Blackwood, Health Enterprise East Chief Executive, said: “In our seventh Annual Innovation Competition Awards, we are focusing on improving patient outcomes through integrated care pathways. Staff throughout the region have been applying across the five categories, with a total of 66 entries received.

“Innovation will play a vital role in enabling the future vision for integrated health and social care services to be realised. Point of care diagnostics, informatics, personalised healthcare and new medical technologies will all play a role in how services are delivered in the future for the benefit of the patient and those who care for them”.

“I should like to thank everyone who has taken part in this year’s competition and also our sponsors whose generosity and support is very much appreciated.”

The system was developed in a collaboration between Dr Allen and Dr Adar Pelah, a vision scientist and Reader in the Department of Electronics, and former MEng student Michael Slater, at the University of York.