

# Alan Bird, MD

Dr. Bird is a world-renowned retinal specialist who began his career at Moorfield's Eye Hospital.



## What is Dr. Bird's background?

Alan Bird, MD, was born in London and attended Guys Hospital, University of London, where he received a medical degree while studying neurology and neurosurgery. During his schooling, Dr. Bird served his ophthalmic residency at Moorfield's Eye Hospital in London. Upon receiving his medical degree, he served a 1-year neurosurgery fellowship at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, and Dr. Bird's academic career also led him to the Jules Stein Eye Center. Eventually, he returned to Moorfield's in 1969. As a staff member in the Institute of Ophthalmology, Dr. Bird made multiple contributions to the treatment of retinal vascular disease and genetic and degenerative retinal disorders. In collaboration with Professor Shomi Bhattacharya, Dr. Bird identified numerous eye disease genes and cemented the standing of the University College London and Moorfield's Eye Hospital as one of the top eye research and care centers worldwide.

Dr. Bird also traveled to Africa, where he researched onchocerciasis (river blindness). This research led to the establishment of ivermectin as the treatment of choice for this disease.

## In the 1970s, Dr. Bird began researching the retina. What did this research include?

While at the Institute of Ophthalmology, Dr. Bird researched inherited and degenerative diseases. Dr. Bird has studied inherited retinal degeneration (eg, retinitis pigmentosa), retinal dystrophy and degenerative diseases of the retina. He also pursued multidisciplinary work including specialized imaging, immunology, experimental pathology and psychophysics.

## Dr. Bird has received various honors and awards during his career. What are some of these prestigious awards?

In addition to his membership as a fellow of the UK National Academy of Medical Science, Dr. Bird boasts a long list of prestigious awards in vision science and ophthalmology. Some of them include: the Alcon Research Award, The Helen Keller Prize, the Kayser Award and the Jules Francois Medal. This year, Dr. Bird was honored with the lifetime achievement award by the Macular Society.

Dr. Bird has made strategic contributions to the US National Eye Institute, the UK Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, INSERM and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

## What is Dr. Bird's role in his recently appointed role as a member of the iCo therapeutics strategic advisory team?

Dr. Bird joined iCo Therapeutics' (Vancouver, Canada) strategic advisory team in March. As a recognized pioneer in not only ophthalmic research, but in teaching and clinical medicine as well, Dr. Bird will act as an advisor for the company's ophthalmic product lines.

"We are thrilled to have such a respected advisor on our team," said Andrew Rae, iCo president and CEO, in a news release. "His knowledge and experience will be invaluable as we continue to seek out and license cutting-edge products to build our ophthalmology portfolio."

iCo develops preexisting drugs for new conditions affecting isolated biological environments such as the eye, spinal cord and joints.

"iCo's business model of developing preexisting drugs for diseases of the eye has significant potential," said Dr. Bird, in a news release. "I look forward to helping with the clinical trial design of these products."

## Has Dr. Bird done any other recent research that deserves mention?

Dr. Bird has played a key role in the design and evaluation of numerous clinical trials involving ground-breaking treatments in retinal disease. Most recently, Dr. Bird served on the Independent Data Safety and Monitoring Committee for the pegaptanib pivotal trial for age-related macular degeneration. He served as the chair of the committee. ■