



SSOWU SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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- Living Heart Valves: Breakthrough in pediatric cardiac surgery
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- Pathway Spotlight: So You Want to Be a General Surgeon?

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the **second edition** of the SSOWU Newsletter!

We were thrilled by the positive response to our August issue and equally encouraged by the strong turnout and feedback from our recent online surgical event. It's exciting to see our community grow in both engagement and enthusiasm.

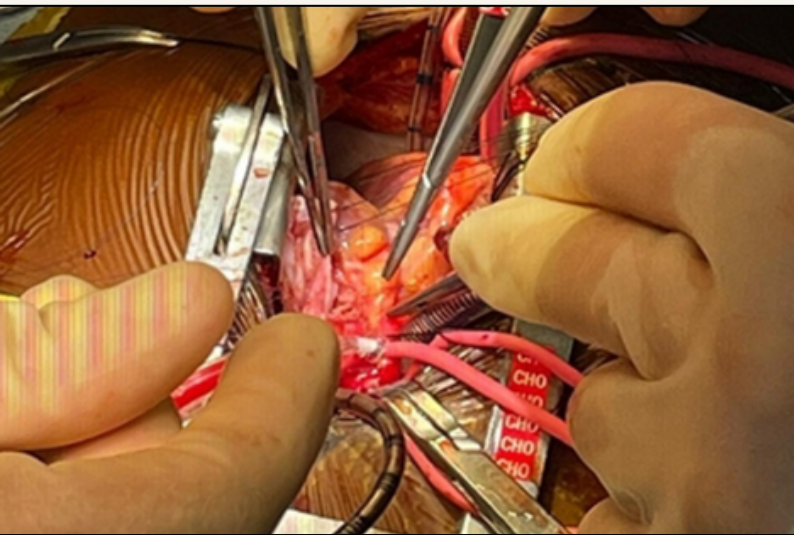
We look forward to bringing you more updates, pathways, and events in the months ahead. Thank you for being part of our growing community.

— SSOWU Executive Team

UPCOMING EVENT

Our next guest speaker will be **Dr. Dean Yeh**, a **General Surgeon** with expertise in **colorectal and robotic surgery**.

Event details and topic will be confirmed soon — keep an eye out for the announcement.



LIVING HEART VALVES SHOW PROMISE ACROSS MULTIPLE PEDIATRIC CONDITIONS

Duke surgeons report success using living donor heart valves that grow with children across multiple congenital conditions. Early results show excellent function, no reoperations, and even reduced need for lifelong immunosuppression—hinting at a new era in pediatric cardiac surgery. [Read more >>](#)

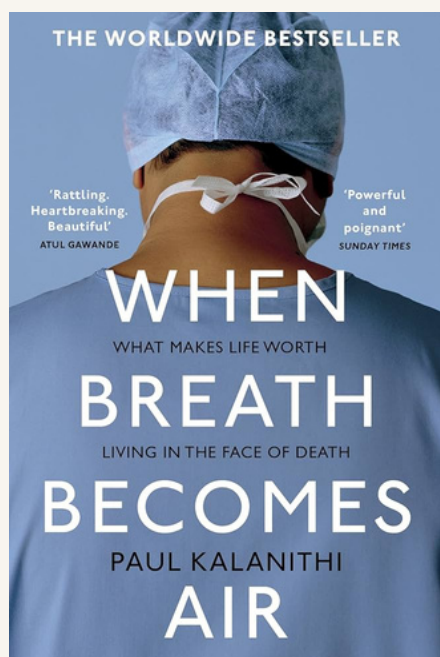
DAILY EYE DROP RESTORES NEAR VISION FOR 10 HOURS

LENZ Therapeutics has scored the FDA's first approval of VIZZ, a once-daily eye drop that contracts the iris to create a pinhole effect, dramatically improving near vision within just 30 minutes, and lasting up to 10 hours, without altering distance clarity. It's backed by three Phase 3 trials covering 30,000 treatment days and is set to hit U.S. markets by mid-Q4 2025, with samples available as early as October.

[Read more >>](#)



BOOK OF THE MONTH: WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR



What does it mean to save lives, only to lose your own?

Neurosurgeon Paul Kalanithi reflects on his shift from surgeon to patient after a terminal diagnosis, confronting the same mortality he once guided others through. With clarity and grace, he examines identity, purpose, and the fragile line between healer and human.

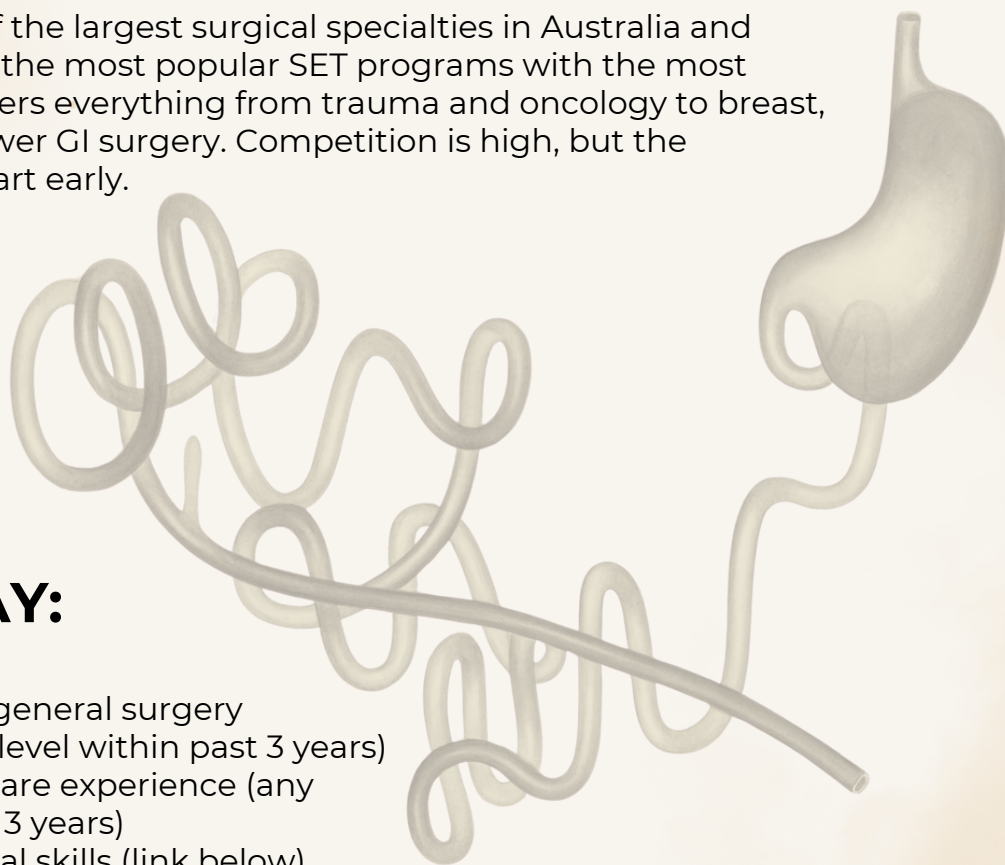
For medical students it is a powerful reminder that medicine is more than skill, it is about meaning. This book challenges us to think about how we practice, how we face suffering, and why we chose this path at all.

Not a textbook, but perhaps one of the most important books you will read in med school.

"Human knowledge is never contained in one person. It grows from the relationships we create between each other and the world, and still it is never complete."
- Paul Kalanithi

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GENERAL SURGEON

General Surgery is one of the largest surgical specialties in Australia and New Zealand and one of the most popular SET programs with the most positions available. It covers everything from trauma and oncology to breast, endocrine, and upper/lower GI surgery. Competition is high, but the pathway is clear if you start early.



THE PATHWAY:

Step 1: Eligibility

- > 26 weeks full-time general surgery experience (any PGY level within past 3 years)
- > 8 weeks of critical care experience (any PGY level within past 3 years)
- Logbook of procedural skills (link below)
- Pass the RACS Generic Surgical Sciences Exam (GSSE)
- Support letter from 4 consultant surgeons

Step 2: Application Components (scored out of 100)

Component	Weight	Subcomponents
Rurality	10%	3 points for rural medical education (12 months) 3 points for rural origin (5 years) 3 points for rural surgical experience
Structured CV	20%	4 points for higher qualifications 3 points for presentations 3 points for publications 3 points for teaching at medical school
Reference Reports	20%	From 15 hospital staff (clerks, nurses, allied health, and JMPs) in surgery rotations.
Semi-Structured Interview	50%	

HOW TO BOOST YOUR APPLICATION:

1

Rural Exposure

- You score points for attending a rural medical school (for 12 months), rural origin or rural surgical experience

2

Get on a General Surgery/ Critical Care Rotation Early

- Plan your early career to include these terms in PGY1-PGY4

3

Publish & Present

- Talk to staff about opportunities to publish papers

4

Get a Teaching Job

- Teach anatomy or clinical skills at your local medical school

5

Consider additional degree

- Surgery is competitive and an additional medical related degree (Masters, diploma, etc) will score CV points

6

Build a Wide Reference Network

- General surgery requires 15 references from clerks, nurses, allied health, and JMOs, so be kind to everyone!

FINAL WORD

Getting into general surgery is extremely achievable if you plan early to hit the CV points and minimum requirements. It offers great variety and job prospects if you are surgically inclined.

Want to chat with someone who's applied or get help preparing your CV? **Reach out to SSOWU to get in touch.**



<https://generalsurgeons.com.au/home/become-a-general-surgeon/general-surgery-selection/>

https://generalsurgeons.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Selection_Procedural-Professional-Skills-Form_NEW.pdf



COMING UP NEXT

Curious about what it takes to fix bones, replace joints, and get patients back on their feet?

In our next issue, we'll be breaking down the **Orthopaedic Surgery pathway** — from SET entry to insider tips on standing out.

Stay tuned — you won't want to skip leg day for this one.



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If you have any **questions, feedback, or suggestions** on what you'd like to see in the future, feel free to contact us via social media or email at **surgicalsocietyuow@gmail.com**

