Professor Pete Coffey, DPhil,

is Theme Lead of Development, Ageing and Disease at UCLs Institute of Ophthalmology and the Co-Executive Director of Translation at UC Santa Barbara’s Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering. He is the principal author and co-author of two landmark papers demonstrating the use of human cells to halt visual deterioration in models of age-related macular degeneration. His achievements include the launch of the London Project to Cure Blindness, which aims to develop a stem cell therapy for the majority of all types of age-related macular degeneration, seminal work on retinal transplantation (as described by Debrossy & Dunnett, Nature Neuroscience 2001). Prof. Coffey has received many honors and awards, including the prestigious Estelle Doheny Living Tribute Award in 2009, Retinitis Pigmentosa International’s Vision Award in 2009, the CIRM Leadership Award in 2010, and the New York Stem Cell Foundation Roberston Prize in 2011. Finally, in 2018, the results of two patients were presented in which an engineered biopolymer with stem cell derived retinal pigment epithelium cells were implanted into the eye. Not only did this demonstrate that regenerative medicine is feasible but resulted in the sustained recovery of reading in blind patients with sudden severe vision loss from Macular Degeneration – a breakthrough validating the stem cell treatment paradigm.