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Keep an eye out

Missing a family wedding, birthday or graduation can be a difficult time for patients unable to leave hospital.

Ever heard of a pen which uses special ink to repair eye injuries?

You have now – and the idea has just been given \$44,125 to bring it to reality as part of the Sydney Research Big Idea to provide pre-seed funding to commercialise a healthcare solution.

The corneal BioPen will have “a significant impact on corneal blindness” and is the brainchild of Professor Gerard Sutton and Jingjing Yu of the University of Sydney’s Save Sight Institute.

The special ink used in the pen will simply ‘colour in’ scratches and promote wound healing and could even help soldiers who sustain eye injuries in battle.

“There is nothing else like this and there are many possible applications for its use. The US military have identified that corneal injuries are quite problematic on the battlefield – the BioPen could address the issue,” said Professor Sutton.

“We are shocked and grateful for the funds. It’s very hard to get a start with research like this.”

The BioPen was one of six innovative ideas put forward in the inaugural Big Idea, funded by Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney during the Sydney Innovation and Research Symposium. Others ideas included a wearable fibre optic sensor to monitor heart rates, a personalised 3D printed airway stent, a birthing simulator for clinical training, a new immunosuppressive drug and a biomarker for coronary artery disease.



The team behind the corneal BioPen at the Big Idea.