

World Sight Day

13 October 2011

Partners

Al-Basar International Foundation, Arab Medical Union, Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, German University in Cairo - SPSA, Global Forum for Media and Development, Federation of Islamic Medical Associations, IMPACT-EMR, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Ministry of Health of Egypt, Manhal Charitable Organization in Somalia, Al-Noor Magrabi Foundation, Kuwait Patients Helping Fund Society and Rotary International.

For further information

please contact us at:

Control and prevention of blindness and deafness programme

World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

P.O.Box 7608, Nasr City, Cairo, 11371, Egypt

Tel: + (202) 22765616

Fax: +(202) 22765415

e-mail: cpb@emro.who.int

web site: www.emro.who.int/cpb

World Sight Day is an international day of awareness, held annually on the second Thursday of October to focus attention on the global issue of avoidable blindness and visual impairment.

Every 5 seconds one person in the world goes blind

VISION 2020: The Right to Sight
Working together to eliminate avoidable blindness

Vision 2020, a global initiative of the World Health Organization and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, aims to strengthen national eye health care systems and facilitate national capacity-building to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

Key messages

- 80% of blindness is avoidable – i.e. readily treatable and/or preventable.
- 90% of blind people live in low-income countries.
- Cataract is the leading cause of blindness – yet it is curable by a simple, cost-effective operation.
- Refractive errors is a leading cause of visual impairment.
- Diabetes affects vision. Diabetic patients must check their eyes regularly.
- Blindness due to infectious diseases and trachoma may be reduced simply by improving personal hygiene and regularly washing your face.



What is cataract?

Cataract is an opacity of the lens of the eye leading to gradual visual impairment seen as blurriness, and finally, blindness.

Most cases of cataract are related to the ageing process, occasionally children can be born with the condition, or a cataract may develop after eye injuries, inflammation and other eye diseases.



Methods to prevent cataract include: quitting smoking, reducing ultraviolet light exposure and regular eye check-ups reduce the incidence of cataract occurrence

Cataract is the cause of 60% of blindness in Egypt

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region

- 37 million people are visually impaired.
- 5.3 million people are blind.

In Egypt

- Approximately 3 million people are visually impaired.
- About 900 000 people are blind.



Successful interventions in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Afghanistan

During 2010 and 2011, approximately 2000 free cataract surgeries were conducted in Afghanistan.



Somalia

In 2010, over 10 000 free cataract surgeries were conducted in Somalia by WHO and the Manhal Charitable Organization. In 2011, WHO, in collaboration with Manhal Charitable Organization, are conducting 1500 free cataract surgeries in Somalia funded by the Kuwait Patients Helping Fund Society.



Tips for the prevention of childhood blindness

1. Clean eyes at birth, apply tetracycline eye ointment.
2. Give pregnant women vitamin A.
3. Promote breastfeeding and good nutrition through the consumption of green vegetables rich in vitamin A, such as carrots and spinach.
4. Immunize children against measles at nine months and give them vitamin A.
5. Wash your hands regularly and keep children's faces clean.
6. Any child with measles or under-nutrition should be given vitamin A.
7. Check children's sight. Eyeglasses will improve vision and should be used regularly.
8. Any child with a white pupil or any obvious abnormality should be referred to an eye doctor urgently.
9. Any child with a serious eye injury or red eye should be referred to an eye doctor immediately.
10. Do not apply traditional medications to the eye.

