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Prevention of Blindness and Deafness News

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

Towards universal access to eye health: a global action plan, 2014-2019

In May 2013, the 66th World Health Assembly endorsed global action plan 2014–2019 on universal eye health. The resolution can be accessed through the following link:
http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA66-REC1/2.A66_R1_Res3-4-en.pdf#page=3. The action plan can be accessed through http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA66/A66_11-en.pdf.

WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma

The 17th annual meeting of the WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma by 2020 was hosted by WHO in Geneva in April 2013. Forty three representatives from national programmes along with a large number of international partners joined the meeting. The focus was on surgery provision for case management, treatment with antibiotics for preventing the disease transmission and cure the infection, the provision of a healthier environment to avoid re-infection. The evaluation framework to assess elimination, the second version of the trachoma manager guide, and the second version of the trichiasis surgery manual were all discussed. There was a presentation on the DFID-funded Global Mapping Project, updates on national activities, and a donor panel discussion. Conclusions and recommendations are available from trachoma@who.int. A full report of the meeting will be available shortly.

Regional and country action since January 2013

January

Libya. The Libyan Scientific Committee for the Prevention of Blindness is established, with monthly meeting between ophthalmologists to review eye health in Libya and improve eye health services.

February

Jordan. The Ministry of Health, Jordan in collaboration with WHO conducts a 3-day workshop to raise awareness in primary care on early detection and treatment of eye diseases..



March

Djibouti. The Ministry of Health, organizes a campaign in collaboration with WHO funded by the Lions Club of Djibouti to conduct 200 free cataract surgeries in five regions.



Fiji and Kiribati. IAPB support trachoma action plan workshops (<http://iapbwesternpacific.org/tap-workshops-in-fiji-and-kiribati/>).

Libya, March 2013. Vision-screening programme for schoolchildren in primary schools starts.

Peoples Republic of China, 13-15 March 2013. The national plan to eliminate trachoma starts with training for provincial teams, including Trachoma Rapid Assessment and grading. Shangdon and Sichuan start the assessments in June.

May 2013

Argentina. A national RAAB design and initiation took place with the technical support of PAHO. The RAAB is being undertaken and financed by the Ministry of Health.

Australia. the launch of the “Investing in Vision”, the results of a study into the costs and benefits of ending avoidable blindness throughout the world. The launch was opened by Australia’s Foreign Minister, Senator Bob Carr. The study was undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers and commissioned by The Fred Hollows Foundation and other eye care NGOs.

Manila WPRO hosted a regional consultation to develop a regional action plan for blindness and visual impairment. The three-day meeting in Manila, determined regional priorities for preventing avoidable blindness, and was the first meeting of its kind for the Region. The regional action plan will be submitted for endorsement at the meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Committee in October.

Qatar, May 2013. The Supreme Council of Health, Qatar in collaboration with WHO organized a workshop to evaluate the present situation of eye health and prevention of blindness data and activities in Qatar, and develop a national five year-plan of eye health and prevention of blindness in Qatar 2014-2019 in line with WHO action plan of prevention of avoidable blindness.



Yemen. Training workshops funded by CBM in collaboration with WHO were held for around 50 health workers in Amran Governorate.

June 2013

Dominican Republic. Workshop to elaborate the national eye care strategy took place with the participation of the Ministry of Health, eye care services, national society of ophthalmology, Lions Club with support from PAHO–WHO, IAPB and ORBIS. A national working group is now producing operational plans and national guidelines.

Fiji. The theme of this year's Pacific Regional Eye Health Conference was "Celebrating 10 years of PacEYES". 115 participants from 10 countries in the region participated. The Conference enabled practitioners and practitioners-in-training to hear new clinical and programmatic responses to eye health, from special Pacific Island perspectives. Managing diabetic retinopathy, new surgical techniques, sustainable spectacle programs, cataract outreach and screening and eliminating trachoma were key discussion points.

Laos. Following a situation analysis of the eye health system, a WHO workshop to strengthen primary eye care within primary health care was held in Luang Prabang. The workshop brought together decision makers from across different government sectors to develop recommendations on improved eye care services through better integration with the health system.

Libya. Three-day national eye health planning workshop was organized in Tripoli by the Ministry of Health, Libya and National Centre for Disease Control in collaboration with WHO and the (EMR-IAPB) to develop a five-year national plan for eye health and prevention of blindness in Libya in line with WHO global action plan for the prevention of avoidable blindness 2014-2019. A national plan was developed.



July 2013.

Colombia Launch of the neglected tropical diseases initiative. WHO provides official certification of elimination of Onchocerciasis in the presence of the Colombian president Dr. Juan Manuel Santos and past president of the US Jimmy Carter, the Minister of Health of Colombia and other authorities and key players. By invitation of the Ministry of Health, PAHO – WHO gave a presentation on the SAFE strategy.

El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica. The PAHO-WHO initiative to strength public services in ophthalmology in Central America with technical the support of IEF and financial support of ORBIS and IAPB started with technical visits by PAHO-WHO and IEF to assess the public services in ophthalmology, Hospital de Especialidades del Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social (ISSS) in San Salvador, El Salvador; Hospital San Felipe in Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Clinica Oftalmologica and Clinica Carlos Duran of the Caja Costaricense del Seguro Social in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Fiji. Two-day regional stakeholders meeting co-hosted by IAPB Western Pacific Region and Fred Hollows Foundation Australia. The meeting discussed how to effectively build on work already taking place to eliminate blinding trachoma and enhance cost effective screening and treatment for diabetic retinopathy in the Pacific.

Peoples Republic of China, July 2013. The annual forum for eye health NGOs and the government was held in Shenyang, Liaoning Province. Participants discussed ways to improve service capacity. The meeting emphasised the importance of action in line with China's existing national plan and the Global Action Plan for eye health. Integration with the health system and coordinated action were key themes for discussion at the forum.

Yemen. Series of eye camps held since January concluded: 6090 consultations held and 730 eye operations carried out. Training workshops funded by CBM in collaboration with WHO were held for around 50 health workers in Amran Governorate.

August 2013

Brazil. PAHO-WHO visit the WHO collaborating center on ROP Instituto Fernandez Figueira, FIOCRUZ in Rio de Janeiro. PAHO-WHO participation in the Pan American Congress of ophthalmology in Rio de Janeiro.

Colombia. PAHO-WHO organizes a training program and certification in TT surgery to Colombian ophthalmologists in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University in Mitu.

Peru. National workshop to review and discuss the national eye care plan in Lima.

PREVENTION OF DEAFNESS

International Ear Care Day, 3 March 2013.

This year, the theme was Healthy Hearing, Happy Life - Hearing Health Care for Ageing People. Activities carried out by WHO included:

- Release of new WHO data on hearing loss: This included a new global estimate of people suffering from hearing loss.
(http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2013/hearing_loss_20130227/en/)
- An updated factsheet, factfile and frequently-asked-questions for the WHO website.
- A web campaign through WHO website, Twitter and Facebook.
- A lunchtime seminar held in WHO Geneva.

WHO collaborating centres and a number of Member States undertook a range of activities to mark this day.



Global Survey

A survey on current global situation regarding national plans and programmes for ear and hearing care, has been completed. Data analysis is being undertaken and a report will be developed in the later part of the year.

Hearing devices technology transfer

A WHO ad hoc consultation on hearing devices technology transfer in LMICs was held in Geneva in March 2013. Major challenges limiting access to hearing devices in LMICs were identified and suitable technologies and mechanisms to promote access to these devices discussed. A roadmap for future engagement in this field has now been developed. A group of experts is currently working on the development of suitable 'preferred product profiles' for hearing aids in LMICs.

Millions of people in the world live with hearing loss that can be prevented or treated

This was published in May 2013 during the World Health Assembly. The document raises awareness about hearing loss. (<http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/news/Millionslivewithhearingloss.pdf>)



Regional and country action since January 2013

April

China. A Strategic Planning meeting of the WHO collaborating centres for prevention of deafness was held in Beijing. The meeting was co-organized and hosted by the China Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Deaf Children, a WHO collaborating centre. Six centres attended this meeting and agreed to form a WHO network of Collaborating

Morocco. WHO provides support to the Government of Morocco for developing a national plan for ear and hearing care. A national strategy was developed and agreed by the National Committee.

June

South Korea. A 5-day WHO Symposium on primary ear and hearing care was organized as part of the 20th World Congress of the International Federation of Otolaryngological Societies (IFOS) in Seoul. This was combined with a poster session and competition on 'raising awareness about ear and hearing care within communities.' The poster session was organized in collaboration with the Society of Sound Hearing.

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