

2018

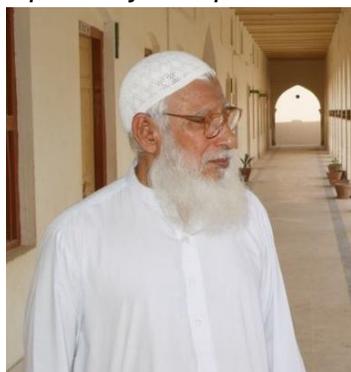
Report on
“World Health & World Optometry Day”



Al Baseer Foundation,
Pakistan

Message from Pioneer National Coordinator for Eye Health Pakistan

23rd of March is marked as World Optometry Day and the following week is World Optometry Week. World Optometry Day is celebrated to create awareness about Optometry as a profession.



Ophthalmologists, optometrists and opticians each play an important role in providing eye care to community. Optometrist is not a replacement of ophthalmologist. With a very dense population and ophthalmologists practicing in cities, the people of rural areas are suffering from lack of eye care. Optometrists were introduced with the aim of working in rural areas and are expected to provide primary eye care where ophthalmologists are not available. They play an important role even in the tertiary centers where they manage refraction and relieve ophthalmologist of a great burden. Personally, I welcome them and hope that they will fill up gap between community and ophthalmologist. The Council of Optometrist should be careful in guiding this important human

resource, not to trespass their limits, avoid conflict of interest by playing subordinate role rather than totally independent source of eye care provision.

Prof. Muhammad Saleh Memon
First National Coordinator for Eye Health in Pakistan
Executive Director, AL Ibrahim Eye Hospital, Karachi Pakistan

Message from National Coordinator & Chairman National Committee for eye health



Optometrists or Allied Vision Sciences Personnel are the vital component of comprehensive eye care team. They are the backbone of eye health system and their contribution in making easy access to eye care at all levels should be highly acknowledged.

I strongly believe in capacitating and strengthening workforce by creating opportunities in order to get desired results of eliminating avoidable blindness in the country aligning with Global Action Plan.

Professor Dr. Asad Aslam Khan (SI)
National coordinator and Chairman
National Committee for eye health Pakistan
Director General and Principal COAVS
CEO Mayo Hospital Lahore

Message from Provincial Coordinator for Eye Health, Sindh



The role of optometrists and other allied personnel is essential in provision of eye care services at every level, i.e., primary, secondary and tertiary. They are certainly the key players in filling up the community eye care needs.

Sindh PCB Program has been proactively involved in training allied personnel since its inception and currently imparting two years' ophthalmic training course. The Program is also working for the creation of posts of allied personnel and their placement in the province and hopefully would get it done soon. Furthermore, The Dow University of Health Sciences is planning to commence a five year OD programme for Optometrists which will be the first of its kind in the public sector in Sindh.

I appreciate that AI Baseer has always extended their support and developed strong liaison with health department Sindh to work together in the province.

It is delightful that AI Baseer celebrates such international days by organizing advocacy or awareness raising sessions and PCB program is always happy to support whenever required.

Dr. Muhammad Muneer Quraishy
Professor of Ophthalmology
Dow Medical College
Project Director, Sindh PCB Program

Message from Director, Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences



I believe that promoting optometry in the field of eye health through celebrating international Optometry day is just wonderful. SIOVS is a rising institute in the field of preventive eye health and soon going to start optometry training in upcoming years. SIOVS strongly promotes Optometry and has created a history by providing opportunities to them in public sector in Sindh province.

I appreciate the efforts of AI Baseer in taking initiatives of raising awareness through such events and certainly considering SIOVS to be the part of it. Best of luck!

Prof. Khalid Iqbal Talpur FRCS
Director SIOVS
Hyderabad

Message from highly experienced technical expert for eye health



It gives me great pride and satisfaction to follow the progress of AI Baseer Foundation as it grows from strength to strength and expands the scope of its services for eye health especially refractive errors and child eye health. The role of non-state actors like AI Baseer Foundation has become even more important with the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals whose aim is to leave no one behind. Governments alone cannot meet the burgeoning needs of eye health in communities. Government efforts need to be complemented by other eye health care providers. On this occasion of World Health Day and World Optometry Day, I congratulate the AI Baseer Foundation for its

initiatives to promote equitable access of disadvantaged communities to eye health services and wish it every success in its future endeavours.

Dr. Haroon Awan
Independent Consultant
Avicenna Consulting Associates

Message from Country Director, CBM Pakistan

“Optometry is a vital component of primary, secondary and tertiary eye care services, though it is still emerging but certainly optometrist’s role is worth taking in meeting the objectives of vision 2020 and beyond as well.

CBM has been engaged in supporting this cadre globally and for Pakistan in particular. CBM appreciates the efforts of the institutes that are engaged in training this cadre and also AI-Baseer in taking initiatives for its promotion through social events as a dominant profession in the country”



Ms. Farah Naz
Country Director, CBM Pakistan

BACKGROUND

AI Baseer Foundation

AI - Baseer Foundation (ABF) is a non-profit eye health organization working for the reduction of avoidable blindness nationwide through both hospital and community based eye care projects. It was established in 2012 with the slogan of “Serving the Deserving”. The aim of the organization is to provide inclusive comprehensive eye care services and prevent blindness. Currently, the organization is serving through its secondary eye care hospital (based in Karachi), Comprehensive Eye Care Program (CECP) University of Lahore Teaching Hospital, Lahore and five active primary eye care centers in district Sujawal, Thatta, Gharo, Kunri and Bela.

World Optometry Day

The 23rd of March is marked as **World Optometry Day** and the following week as World Optometry Week. **World Optometry Day** is generally celebrated to create awareness about optometry as a profession.

World Health Day

The World Health Day is celebrated by the people all across the world every year on 7th of April under the leadership of World Health Organization to draw the mass people attention towards the importance of global health. The theme of World Health Day 2018 was: **Universal health coverage**: everyone, everywhere and the slogan “**Health for All**”.

“Health is a human right. No one should get sick or die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access the services they need.” Dr Tedros Adhanom.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF CELEBRATIONS

AI Baseer Foundation Pakistan celebrated World Optometry Day and World Health Day jointly on 7th - 8th April, 2018. The purpose of celebrating these two events together was to show strong association of optometrists in achieving eye health goals and encourage their services as an essential part of the comprehensive eye care team.

OBJECTIVES:

- To raise awareness about optometry and eye health among eye health professionals and general public.
- To educate allied personnel including AI Baseer’s staff regarding their roles aligning with national eye health plan.
- To explore achievements and challenges of optometrists in delivering hospital and community eye care services

CELEBRATIONS’ ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The celebrations were held in two segments:

1) Awareness Raising Social event – Consisted of informative presentations on eye health & optometry, interactive sessions among participants based on challenges and achievements in optometry.

2) Eye examinations in the community - Practiced optometry in the field and raised eye health awareness

1) Awareness Raising event at Al Baseer Eye Hospital, Karachi on 7th April, 18:

The event started with the recitation of holy verses of Quran and introduction of the participants. Presentations were given on raising awareness regarding eye health and optometry as a profession. The target audience were ABF's donors/partners, health department representatives, peer eye health organizations, staff members and local community.

In general, the audience were made aware about:

1. **“World Council of Optometry’s definition of Optometry”** highlighting optometrist is an essential team player of comprehensive eye care team and fulfilling the community eye care need.
2. Role of optometry in the field of ophthalmology aligning with national eye health plan.
3. Global health challenge with its solution.
4. Eye health challenges at national level i.e., cycle of poverty and visual disability.
5. Status of Human Resource - Existing VS required eye health cadre in Pakistan.



Moreover, taking advantage of this opportunity, ABF's staff (Allied Personnel) were also educated about their roles and responsibilities aligning with national eye health plan and its recommended composition of ophthalmic team. The requirements of Human Resource Development were also discussed at provincial level which include creation of posts and deployment of trained HR, support in terms of infrastructure, technology & management and, effective and sustainable assessments.

Role of Al Baseer in promoting optometry and future plans

Chief Executive Officer, Al Baseer Foundation expressed that optometrists or Allied personnel are the vital component of each and every segment of ABF's projects and activities. Since the inception of ABF, optometrists remained the integral part of the foundation and are also being supported for professional growth. Two of the optometrists have successfully been upgraded to Doctors of optometry. Moreover, the program department of Al Baseer is also led by a female optometrist.



Brief analysis of role of optometrists in Al Baseer Eye Hospital since 2013 showed a remarkable growth in number of patients being examined at Al Baseer specifically children. Al Baseer started with one optometrist in 2013 and currently there are five optometrists working in the foundation.

The key requirements for growth include integration in three areas particularly (i) Planning, (ii) Human Resource and (iii) Data management, analysis and monitoring.

Keeping in view current deficiencies in Sindh province, ABF is planning (i) to initiate training programs for allied personnel in order to fulfill the community eye care needs in the province, (ii) advocacy and support to provincial health department for creation of posts of allied personnel and their deployment and (iii) capacity building of optometrists more related to research related activities and data analysis.

Interactive session - At the end of the event, all the participants specifically optometrists had an open discussion regarding the challenges they face at both hospital and community levels.

The main challenges discussed were (i) lack of awareness in the community about optometry as a profession, (ii) lack of acceptance among eye health professionals, (iii) placement issues in public sector and (iv) unclear roles and responsibilities. The solutions to these challenges were also discussed summarized as (i) awareness raising seminars to promote optometry and (ii) well-defined role and responsibilities to each and every cadre of ophthalmic team.

Apart from the challenges, positive aspects and growth of the profession was also recounted that many of the optometrists are the permanent part of public sector and national and provincial authorities are continuously working for the creation of posts of allied personnel & their deployment. Moreover, vast post graduate opportunities are also available for optometrists throughout the country and their services are also being acknowledged at both national and provincial levels as an important comprehensive eye care team member.

2) Eye Examinations in Community on 8th April, 18

Free eye screening camp was organized at poor locality of Lyari Town Karachi. More than **300** people were examined, **151** medicines provided, **165** glasses distributed and **49** patients referred for further diagnosis and treatment. **One person with physical disability** also availed the services.



CONCLUSION

The celebration of World optometry and health day through social event and community eye screening camp turned out quite effective medium for raising awareness in community regarding optometry and eye health as global and national priority. The optometrists of Al Baseer and peer organizations felt encouraged and are more motivated to focus on key areas for improvement and work for the larger benefits of the community.

ABF believes that allied personnel are the key players for reducing the burden of ophthalmologists and providing comprehensive eye health services i.e., promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Their services are essential for every eye health component either hospital based services, community or trainings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocacy of government is needed to continue investing in eye health and allocate seats for trained HR in governmental structure.
- Advocacy of government to strengthen public private partnerships - Eye care organizations, health department and other key stakeholders such as social welfare department, education department and disabled persons organizations should work together to reduce blindness and celebrate such global events jointly to create awareness at broader level in the country.
- Optometry council should be introduced in public sector to ensure proper compliance.
- Uniform comprehensive curriculum must be adopted and implemented in all public and private training institutes in accordance with the National Committee for Eye Health recommendations
- In addition, every segment of the society (persons with disabilities, women, men, older people, girls and children) should be involved in awareness raising events to ensure comprehensive inclusiveness.

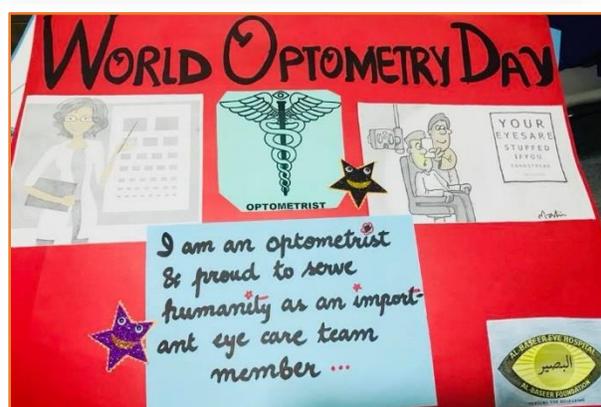
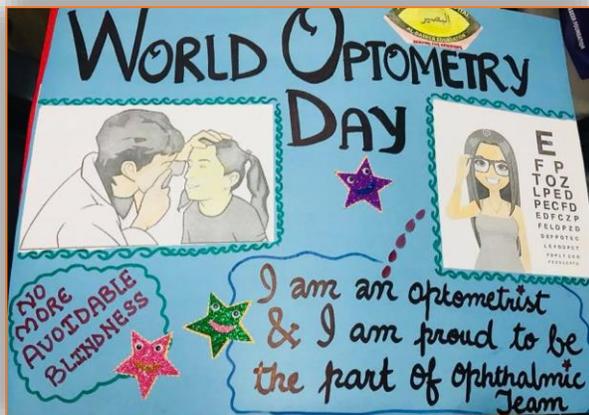
“Words of Appreciation”



I appreciate the efforts of my team for celebrating the event with the message of “Eye Care for all” and sensitizing the masses towards the field of optometry.

*I also encourage my team to engage more institutes (public and private both), eye care organizations, social service sector, and disabled people’s organizations in 2019’s celebrations and also to reach the community; the children, the women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and poorest of the poor in order to make it inclusive - **Chief Executive Officer, Al Baseer Foundation***

“Few Glimpses of the event”



Note: Al Baseer Foundation considers the celebration of “**World Health Day and World Optometry Day**” inclusive since all the major eye health leaders/stakeholders in the country shared inspirational messages on the occasion regarding eye health and Optometry.

‘World Health & Optometry Day’

Social Event Scheduled on Saturday, 7th April, 2018

At Al Baseer Eye Hospital, Karachi

Duration: 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Agenda of the event

S.No:	Item/Topic	Duration	Speaker
1.	Introduction / Welcome Address	1:30 – 1:35 pm	Dr. Sanober, Consultant Ophthalmologist/ Ms. Naila, Optometrist
2.	Recitation	1:35 – 1:40 pm	Mufti Abdullah
3.	Presentation by optometrists on ‘Optometry as a profession’	1:40 – 1:50 pm	Dr. Sameer, Doctor of Optometry
4.	Key achievements, challenges faced by optometrist in hospital and community	1:50 – 2:00 pm	Mr. Siddique, Senior Optometrist
5.	Presentation on ‘Eye Health Challenge and Role of optometrist in compliance to National Eye Health Plan in the country’	2:00 – 2:10 pm	Ms. Fatima Zehra, Program Manager, Al Baseer
6.	Presentation on “Role of Al Baseer in promoting optometrist as a profession and contributing in eye health’	2:10 – 2:20 pm	Dr. Muhammad Khizar Bashir, CEO AL Basser
7.	Open discussion on achievements, gaps/ challenges	2:20 – 2:30 pm	Participants/Optometrists
8.	Vote of Thanks	2:30 - 2:35 pm	Dr. Mujahid Inam, Visiting Surgeon
9.	Lunch	2:35 pm	

- **Community Eye screening camp was also organized on Sunday, 8th April, 18 in Lyari town, Karachi to practice optometry in field and celebrate World Optometry and Health Day.**