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PRESS RELEASE

IACLE to play a crucial role in educating tomorrow's practitioners

The expansion of optometric education worldwide will open up major opportunities for the International Association of Contact Lens Educators (IACLE), which celebrates its 40th Anniversary today.

According to discussions at the Academy 2019 Orlando and 3rd World Congress of Optometry (23-27 October), hosted in Florida by the American Academy of Optometry and World Council of Optometry (WCO), the global need for more optometry schools and skilled personnel points to a crucial role for IACLE in educating the practitioners of the future.

At the first public presentation of its *World Report on Vision*, issued last month, the World Health Organization (WHO) told Academy delegates that the shortage of trained human resources was one of the greatest challenges to increasing the availability of eye care services and reducing the prevalence of preventable visual impairment around the world.

The number of people worldwide with myopia was projected to rise from 2.62bn in 2020 to 4.76bn – nearly half the world's population – by 2050. The overall prevalence of myopia was highest in high-income countries of the Asia-Pacific region and in East Asia, said WHO.

IACLE President **Dr Shehzad Naroo** attended a Global Summit on Optometric Education, where delegates heard that meeting eye care needs and ensuring good quality education required a global curriculum, educators to deliver it, and people to lead. 'IACLE fulfils all these roles in contact lens education and is already active in 79 countries,' said Dr Naroo.

'We have the resources and curriculum (IACLE Contact Lens Course 2020), we train the educators (Train-the-Trainer program) and we develop the leaders (Fellowship of IACLE).'

Dr Naroo also joined the panel for the Joint Public Health and Environmental Vision Section/WCO Symposium: *International Optometry: Public Health, Education, and Personnel Issues* and, with Director of Global Education **Lakshmi Shinde**, took part in the WCO's 3rd President's Forum: *Optometry's Role in Addressing the Changing Face of Technology, Public Health and Clinical Care*.

'Overall, meetings with WCO were very positive that the IACLE message is being realized,' said Dr Naroo. 'IACLE looks forward to participating in the 4th World Congress on Optometry, which will take place in Melbourne, Australia in September 2021.'

IACLE continued its 40th year celebrations in Orlando, the final destination for its interactive exhibition booth on the theme of ‘Exceptional Education. Exponential Impact’. Hundreds of visitors at events around the world during 2019 have made their mark on a time wall of milestones in the Association’s history.

To mark the anniversary, outgoing WCO President **Dr Scott Mundle** commented: ‘On behalf of the World Council of Optometry, I want to recognize and congratulate President Dr Shehzad Naroo and IACLE on its 40th Anniversary. If it were not for the research and education of IACLE members, global optometry would not have its current stature and success, nor the great future we all hope and wish it will have.’

-ENDS-

CAPTION

World Health Organization Coordinator **Dr Alarcos Cieza** delivers the first public presentation of its *World Report on Vision* at the Academy 2019 Orlando and 3rd World Congress of Optometry (Image courtesy of American Academy of Optometry).

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. IACLE’s founding meeting took place on 6 November 1979 in Monte Carlo, Monaco.
2. Over four decades, IACLE has brought together a total of 2,500 members in 91 countries, who have instilled their knowledge to as many as 170,000 students. IACLE estimates that more than 250 million contact lens wearers have experienced the life-changing benefits of contact lenses as a result.
3. Read the World Health Organization’s *World Report on Vision* [here](#) and find out more about the World Council of Optometry [here](#).
4. Information on all IACLE activities and membership benefits is available [here](#).

ABOUT IACLE

The International Association of Contact Lens Educators was established in 1979 and is a non-profit, non-political association. IACLE has 869 (as of 30 June 2019) active members in 79 countries and welcomes contact lens educators from all eye care professions and related disciplines. IACLE is dedicated to raising the standard of contact lens education and promoting the safe use of contact lenses worldwide. It is the leading provider of educational and information resources essential to contact lens educators. IACLE is supported by leading global contact lens manufacturers: Platinum Sponsor Alcon, Gold Sponsor CooperVision, Silver Sponsor Johnson & Johnson Vision, Bronze Sponsor Bausch + Lomb and Donor Sponsor Euclid.