Dr Timothy Fricke, WCO Fellowship in Vietnam 2019, Final Report

Background

I travelled from Australia (home) to Vietnam in November 2018 with the primary purpose of supporting the recently established optometry programs in Vietnam. Prior to 2014, there were a handful of foreign-trained optometrists in Vietnam and no local schools. Since then, two university-based optometry schools have been established – one in Ho Chi Minh City and one in Hanoi. Both are in very early stages of development, and in need of support in critical areas. The size of the Vietnamese population, the speed of development throughout the country, and potential for regional leadership make it critical for optometry to be successful in Vietnam. I was invited by Vietnamese colleagues to support the delivery of evidence-based pediatric optometry and binocular vision education, assist the development of optometry-ophthalmology relations, and develop opportunities for clinical training of optometry students.

This final report details the activities delivered against the components described in my WCO Fellowship Application (approved via email from Sue Chiles on August 16, 2018).

Activities delivered

All components of the WCO Fellowship application were delivered between November 7, 2018 and December 1, 2018.

- Presented lecture on the epidemiology of high myopia and its complications at the Vietnam Ophthalmologic Society congress in Ho Chi Minh City (http://vos2018.org.vn/), plus promoted optometry in discussions with various professionals around the congress over 3 days (November 8-10, 2018).

- Delivered daily practicals and clinical supervision to Hanoi Medical University optometry students and staff (optometrists and ophthalmologists), plus Hanoi Eye Hospital 2 staff (ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses) in Hanoi for 2.5 weeks (November 14-30, 2018)
    - Performed in Hanoi Eye Hospital 2, which has been run by ophthalmology to the exclusion of optometry. Demonstrated optometry skills and clinical problem-solving capacity on wide variety of pediatric and binocular vision cases. Developed trust then involved local optometry staff and students with the aim of setting positive inter-professional eye care delivery models.

- Delivered lectures 4 evenings per week (2 hours each) to Hanoi Medical University optometry students and staff (optometrists and ophthalmologists), Hanoi Eye Hospital 2 staff (ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses), Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology staff (optometrist, ophthalmologists, ophthalmic nurses), and various staff from a variety of other hospitals, in Hanoi for 2.5 weeks (average audience 60+ per evening). All lectures had problem-based learning components and took an evidence-based approach to developing care- and teaching-models
    - Lecture 1 – Problem-solving in pediatric refractive error
    - Lecture 2 – Problem-solving in binocular vision
    - Lecture 3 – Problem-solving in pediatric vision loss
    - Lecture 4 – Evidence-based care of amblyopia

- Lecture 5 – Evidence-based care of strabismus
- Lecture 6 – Evidence-based care of accommodation-vergence disorders
- Lecture 7 – Evidence-based myopia management part 1
- Lecture 8 – Evidence-based myopia management part 2
- Lecture 9 – Difficult cases
- Lecture 10 - Review

- Held meetings with a range of stakeholders (including Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology heads of units, Hanoi Medical University heads, Hanoi Eye Hospital 2 directors, Alina Vision director and head of ophthalmology)
    - Meetings aimed to develop and strengthen the place of optometry in the Vietnamese eye care system, and identify and develop opportunities for optometry students to obtain clinical experience. Both are critical problems currently threatening to limit the development of optometry in Vietnam.

- Discussed with and advised optometry lecturers regarding Vietnam optometry curriculum
    - Optometry lecturers in Vietnam are either ophthalmologists (many with a limited or skewed idea of optometry's role in the health system) or optometrists (who have been recently trained in India or Malaysia). They are intelligent and enthusiastic, but need support to improve knowledge, techniques, and quality of optometry education delivery. Both groups benefit from mentoring, particularly in specialty areas such as paediatrics and binocular vision.

- Advised Garryn Marlen on article describing fellowship in WCO October 2018 e-news, which was also adapted by Optometry Australia News (http://www.optometry.org.au/blog-news/2018/11/13/sights-set-on-vietnam/).

Expenses

Costs incurred included:

- Equipment purchased (1 Randot stereotest (aud374) and 1 loose prism set (aud429) from Designs for Vision, Australia on October 24, 2018

  aud803 = **usd572** (receipt attached)

- Flight from Melbourne, Australia to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on November 7, 2018, and Hanoi, Vietnam to Melbourne Australia on December 1, 2018 (flights from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi were covered by Hanoi Medical University)

  aud851 = **usd606** (receipt attached)

- Visa stamping fee (visa application and cost was covered, but not the stamping fee)

  usd25 (receipt attached)

- Accommodation in Ho Chi Minh City (November 7 – November 12, 2018)

  aud350 = **usd249**

- Incidentals (data access and food for 25 days)

  aud30/day = aud750 = **usd534**

Costs not included in fellowship application: my time, domestic flights (covered by Hanoi Medical University), accommodation in Hanoi (covered by Hanoi Eye Hospital 2), Vietnam visa (covered by Vietnam International Health Collaboration).