



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

Roles Of Optometrists in Vision Screening

KUALA LUMPUR, 2nd AUGUST 2023 – The Association of Malaysian Optometrists (AMO) aims to promote high standards of professional conduct and professional education among optometrists.

An Optometrist is a professional eye care provider. Optometrists receive education primarily focused on eyes and undergo comprehensive training to perform eye examinations during their 4-years of Optometry degree course in public or private institutes of higher learning. Optometrists can help to conduct eye examinations, detect and determine the presence of vision-related problems in all age ranges. During an eye examination, Optometrists are able to detect vision problems caused by refractive error (short-sightedness or long-sightedness), squint, and eye diseases such as red eye, glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and others.

Young children with vision problems often do not know that the way they see the world is not the way everyone sees it. Many eye disorders have no warning signs and can only be detected by a vision screening. Hence vision screening, especially at school is crucial to identify children who have or are at risk of developing amblyopia, which can lead to permanent visual impairment. Other problems that can be detected by vision screening include strabismus (eye misalignment), cataracts, glaucoma, ptosis (droopy eyelid), refractive errors such as myopia, hyperopia and astigmatism, and other more serious conditions such as tumours or neurological diseases. The earlier a problem is detected, the better the chance to obtain maximal vision through appropriate treatment.

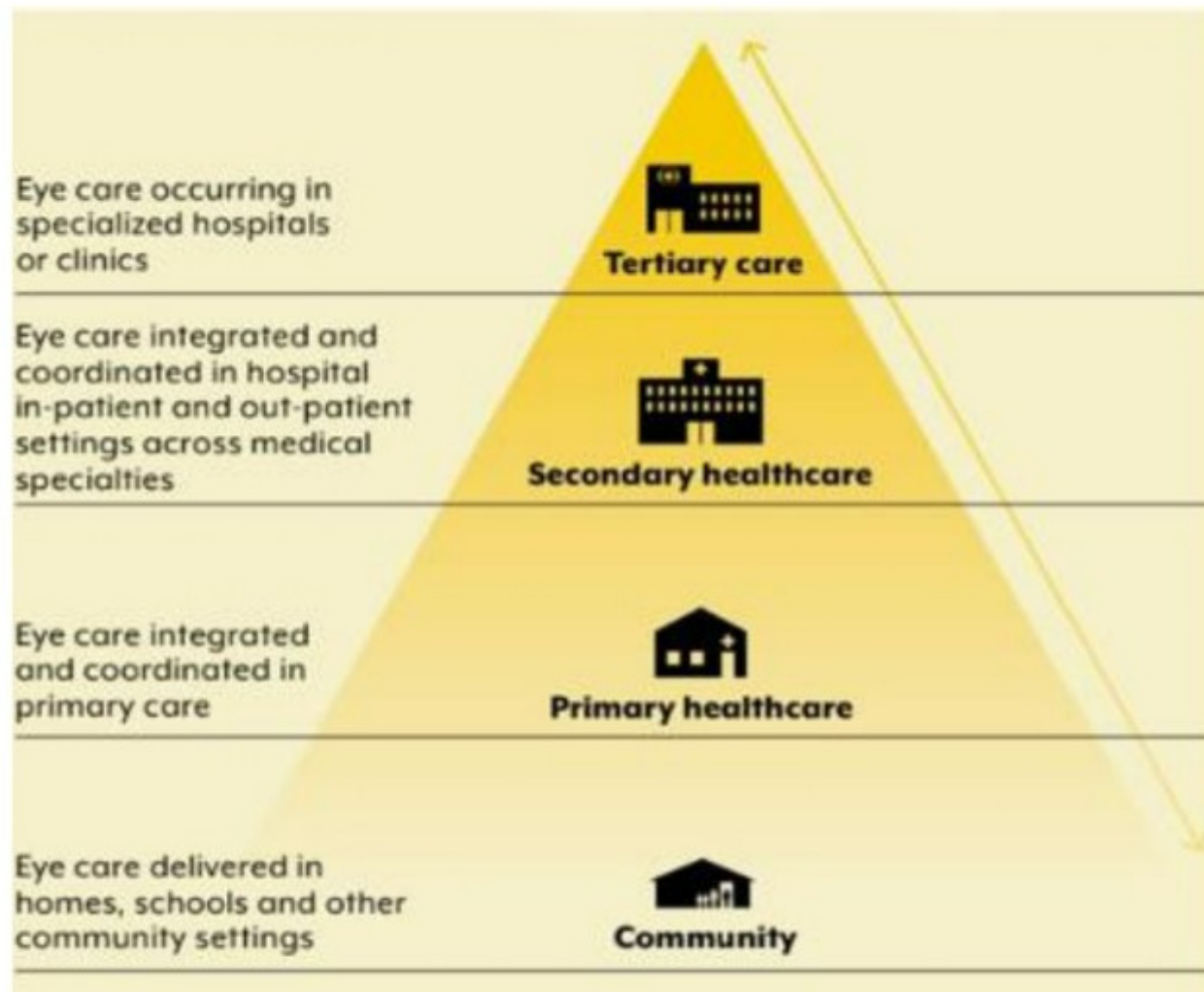


Diagram: Integration of Eye Care into Primary Eye Care through Training of Existing Staff: A Case Example from Tajikistan.

Optometrists are working in the community and primary healthcare sector. They are capable of performing vision screenings and examining the eyes for vision defects. Utilizing specialized clinical tools and assessments, Optometrists obtain a thorough picture of a child's overall eye health, vision and visual skills. Additionally, Optometrists and Ophthalmologists work closely together to provide integrated eye care for their patients.

In conclusion, eye care in school children involves the cooperation of parents and teachers and a good network of health centers and Optometrists. AMO hopes to raise public awareness that Optometrists have been recognized as an important primary eyecare providers to conduct eye care services. Regular comprehensive eye exams help early detection and treatment of vision problems and help to ensure that the child's eyes and vision are developing properly.

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