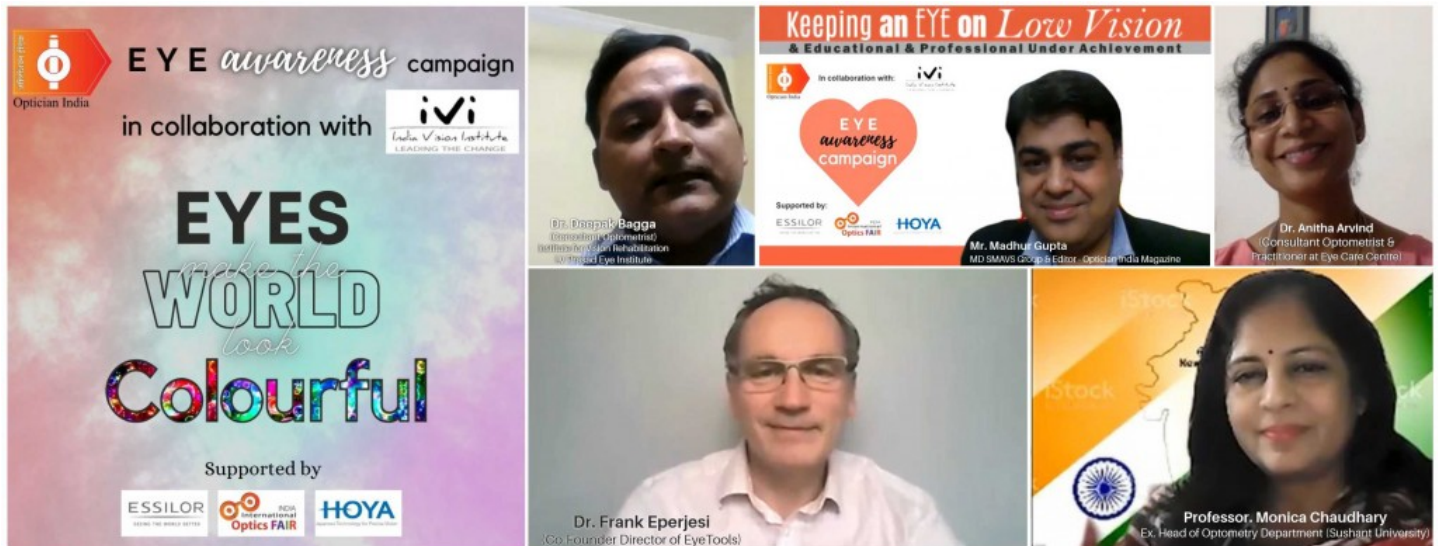


Eyes make the World Look Colorful – An Optician India Eye Awareness Initiative

Online Session on Keeping an Eye on Low Vision and Educational & Professional Underachievement



Delhi, New Delhi, Mar 23, 2021 (Issuewire.com) - *Eyes make the World Look Colorful – An Optician India Eye Awareness Initiative*

[Optician India Magazine](http://Issuewire.com) Launched the second leg of its **Eye Awareness Campaign** In collaboration with the [India Vision Institute](http://Issuewire.com) supported by [Essilor India](http://Issuewire.com), [India International OpticsFAIR 2021](http://Issuewire.com) & [Hoya Vision Care](http://Issuewire.com) around the theme of *[Eyes Make the World Look Colorful](http://Issuewire.com)* while highlighting the benefits that the eyes provide us with. The ultimate tribute and the very least individuals can do to show gratitude is by **Getting their Eyes Tested** at a regular interval, preferably annually.

Optician India Magazine has conducted a session to celebrate World **Optometry Day** on the 23rd of March 2021 the topic is **Keeping an Eye on Low Vision and Educational & Professional Underachievement**.

The session was hosted by [Sh Madhur Gupta](http://Issuewire.com), MD [SMAVS](http://Issuewire.com) & Editor **Optician India** along with [Professor Monica Chaudhry](http://Issuewire.com) having a rich experience in the field of Education, last being the head of the Optometry Department at the **Sushant University**, **Dr. Anitha Arvind**, Consultant & Practitioner at **Eye Care Centre** having a demonstrated history of working in the higher education Industry. **Dr. Frank Eperjesi**, Co-founder of **EyeTools UK**, an online learning and development platform & **Dr. Deepak Bagga**, Consultant Optometrist, Institute for Vision Rehabilitation, **LV Prasad Eye Institute**.

The session can be watched here: <http://opticianindia.net/awareness>

Initiating the session Dr Deepak Bagga talked about the impact of low vision at early childhood may have implications on learning, their applying knowledge in learning to communicate with others and almost all aspects of life. The limitations due to low vision and its impact need to be studied further.

The availability of low vision rehabilitation services though mandated by the WHO to be made available as integrated services are affected by not majorly being covered by the insurance sector considering that the total addressable market is low for the unavoidable causes like a low vision as compared to the avoidable ones. The cost of the assistive devices is also high due to the lower scale. There is very less inclusion of this topic in the curriculum for the practitioners and this is also a major cause for affecting the delivery of low vision rehabilitation services.

On the issue of the economic impact due to low vision eye problems, Prof. Monica Chaudhry spoke about the inception of the concept of the Low Vision Centre in her initial practice years around 3 decades ago at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). She mentioned the lack of availability of proper equipment at that time which surprisingly has not improved even till date to the extent needed. The quantum of low vision centres for the huge population of 1.3 billion can be counted on fingers. The optometrists who practice real low vision services are also limited. She gave an example of an 11 year old child who brought his elderly grandparent to a rural eye checkup camp providing free services. On probing she found out that this child was made to stay at home to take care of his grandfather as the parents being laborers could not afford to stay back and take care.

Assessing the economic impact of just this old man who is not being productive may not be the correct way as the child is made out to skip education and the whole family is impacted economically. Another example shared by her was of professionally non-productive mothers who have to assist their children with vision impairment & also spouses of the adults who need help for transporting them to their job locations or help in day to day life situations due to vision impairment. Thus the numbers and figures quoted about economic blindness are quite incorrect. Also, the exact quantum of the individuals affected by vision problems is not known in India. With a population of 1.3 billion if the incidence is even 1% the situation is quite alarming.

Dr Anitha Arvind added the psycho-social angle to the debate by citing the direct costs like medical expenses and indirect costs like loss of productivity that cannot be measured have on the economy of the Nation as a whole. Citing the examples of developed countries like the US where the economic burden is estimated to be USD 30 billion and in the UK where the population is marred by age-related macular degeneration due to the aging population, the economical impact on India has to be massive. Catching the problem early by increased screening and rehabilitation is the key to minimizing the economic impact.

Dr Frank Eperjesi gave the international perspective by sharing the reasons behind the reluctance of Optometrists to provide low vision services mainly being clinically challenging and financially unrewarding. Statistically even in the UK a very few practitioners provide low vision services hence the problem is not unique to India alone. The reasons already quoted like expensive devices is a major barrier but the equipment provided needs substantial training and usage-related assistance that consumes tremendous amount of time of the practitioner resulting in making it less financially lucrative as well. He also mentioned the need for governments to take notice of the problem citing it as the “Double Whammy” effect, as non-productive individuals actually take out revenue from their coffers when a simple device or a low vision service could help convert these very individuals into productive and revenue-generating ones. Highlighting the good practices of a few countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Dr Eperjesi emphasized the need for the practitioner community to hold the government and their colleagues to account for leaving out this important area of low vision impairment from sharp focus.

In trying to find a solution for lack of interest by the practitioners due to being not lucrative, more time consuming, lower educational skills of practitioners leading to lesser confidence in dealing with such

patients, poor distribution of assistive devices Prof Monica Chaudhry laid emphasis on education and lauded the EyeTools Platform for providing a very high level of content for the benefit of all eye care practitioners across the World. Dr Frank Eperjesi offered the solution of a loan system for the individuals supported by the governments to help tide over the huge financial cost of the devices and when the individual tides over and becomes productive could return the same back, also another way where the practitioner gets rewarded for attending to low vision patients besides making a strong pitch for the need for entrepreneurs in India to look at manufacturing the devices locally.

Dr Anitha Arvind added that the co-management between the ophthalmologists, the optometrists and the opticians is also not that great in India, emphasizing the need for generating awareness around low vision across the entire spectrum of the population. She suggested using social media in a big way considering the huge user base in India.

Dr Deepak Bagga informed about the practicalities of the production costs of devices and the barriers to the usage of devices due to social prejudices, lack of education of the mainstream education system where users of these devices are treated differently. He also added the results of a study on the psychological aspects of depression and anxiety on patients with low vision and emphasized the need for assessing the patients mental and emotional well alongside the regular dispensing of a prescription. LV Prasad Eye Institute has added peer support and peer counseling to address the issue.

Concluding the Session Prof Monica Chaudhry talked about the stigmas, need for awareness and lauded the efforts of Optician India to start discussing the topic.

This campaign is underway with the help of over 1300 eye care practitioners who can download and personalize the various creative options from videos and posters available at <https://opticianindia.net/download>. Also, they have an option to get the creative personalized free of cost by making a request at opticianindia100@gmail.com

Leading change for the better - Optician India Magazine is also proud to announce the launch of the India International Optics FAIR 2021 from 10-12 April 2021 at Expocentre, Sec 62, NOIDA (Delhi NCR) an Exhibition on Optics & Ophthalmics.

Recently Optician India Magazine Facebook page has crossed the important milestone of reaching 10000 followers.

Keywords: Optician, Awareness, Campaign, Optician India, LVPEI, IVI, vision, eyecare, eyewear, optometrist, optometry, ophthalmic, spectacles, glasses, eye health

Session Youtube Link: <https://opticianindia.net/awareness>

Youtube Channel: <https://youtube.com/c/opticianindia>

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