

The need for comprehensive low vision services

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Definitions

low vision

visual impairment that is severe enough to impede a persons' ability to learn or perform usual tasks of daily life but still allows some functionally useful visual discrimination. It covers a range form mild to severe visual impairment, but excludes total blindness

visual impairment

Damage to the visual system that impedes a persons' ability to learn or perform usual tasks of daily life, given a child's level of maturity and cultural environment. The term includes both low vision and blindness.

blindness

Absence of vision. Total blindness is complete absence of vision; rare

What are low vision (vision rehabilitation) services?

1. Detection + identification	Education; Health; Caregivers; OPDs: CBID
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2. Eye health/clinical low vision assessment and its interventions	**Eye health services**
↓	
3. Getting spectacles, devices	Education; Eye Health; Caregivers; OPDs; CBID
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4. Assistance in use of 'best' vision (in an appropriate school setting)	Education; Caregivers; CBID
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5. Monitoring / follow-up	Education; Eye Health; Caregivers ; OPDs: CBID





OPD= Organisation of People with Disabilities CBID= Community Based Inclusive Development

Spectacles and low vision devices: Example of comprehensive service delivery

1. Finding child/adult who needs an eye check, refraction; Ensuring they reach eye health (with low vision) services

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2. Diagnosis, refraction, magnification assessment and prescriptions. Initial training in use of glasses and devices. Giving clear information on all results to client/teacher/parent/CBID staff

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3. Obtaining the correct spectacles, devices

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4. Using the spectacles, devices for all activities as needed, including further training in their use

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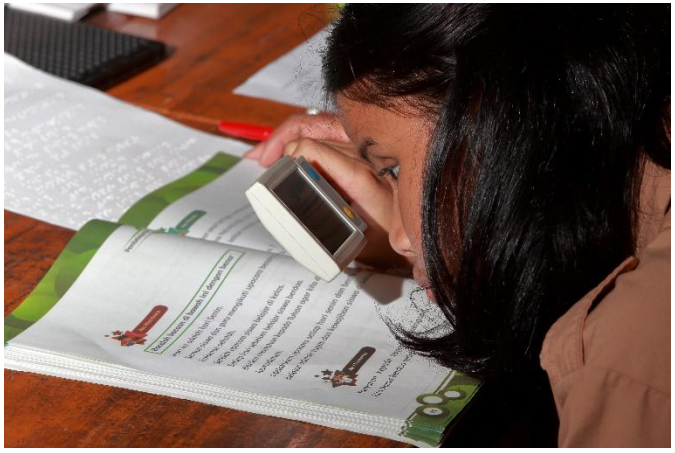
5. Follow-up: E.g. new glasses, new magnifier (text in schoolbook smaller in higher grades)

Importance of quality refraction: Example of changes in visual acuity

mean improvement – 1755 clients

		Hospital
Distance VA	**logMAR**	**-0.20** (sd 0.22)
Near VA	**logMAR**	**-0.35** (sd 0.30)





Note on Refraction

- Is there access to refraction? At which service level?
- Can eye care staff assess and refract ***young*** children?
- Is there time to provide *quality* refraction to a person with, for example, learning disabilities?
- Can the child / family get the glasses needed in their area?





Why should we have low vision/ vision rehabilitation services?

Benefits for clients and family

- continue to live independently and maintain their accustomed quality of life

- decreased emotional distress and increased vision-related functioning

Improvements in



- reading performance, mobility,
- using assistive devices,
- watching television,
- performing daily activities inside and outside the home, at work, at school

Challenges for vision rehabilitation services worldwide

- ‘time consuming’, ‘expensive’, ‘not a priority’
- Low awareness of the fact ‘something can be done’
- Worldwide 5 – 10% of people with low vision have access to vision rehabilitation services
- People with disabilities not included
- Little access to affordable magnifying devices

New: Modern Solutions Nairobi



Ophthalmologists



Lack of training and of awareness of benefits of vision rehab services among ophthalmologists

Vision rehabilitation should be the **standard of care** for patients who are losing their vision, with early referral

- This is something that all ophthalmologists should keep in mind every day at work

- Need to 'shift the focus beyond the eye'.

Who needs vision rehabilitation services?



- ✓ People of all ages with a severely reduced ability to do daily activities due to irreversible vision loss



- ✓ People with other disabilities, such as intellectual impairment, hearing impairment, cerebral palsy
- ✓ Children operated for cataract at young age
- ✓ People with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI); people with visual processing disorders

Inclusive eye health and disability: The meaning of inclusive eye health



Inclusion



Ensuring eye health programs are inclusive of people from all disability groups, including vision impairment, *and* other marginalised people, and that people with permanent vision impairment access their right to wider opportunities.

Integrated People-Centred Eye Care

Low vision services promote access to inclusive eye health

- Variety of assessment techniques
- Variety of resources, like tests
- Time
- Communication methods
- Assessment area adapted to needs of clients
- Networking



How many adults/elderly have functional low vision (FLV)?

Nigeria

- Age–sex standardized prevalence of FLV in people ≥ 40 years of was 2.7% (95% CI, 2.4 –3.1%)

- Only 9.3% of those with FLV were of working age and literate

Minimum estimate:

- 5000 adults/million population (all ages) who require assessment for low vision services and a

- further 340 who are totally blind and who may benefit from rehabilitation services

How many children have low vision in Blantyre, Malawi

Population 600.000 40% children < 15 yrs.= 240.000

1 in 1000 = low vision 240 children with LV

(if all these children had surgery, quality and early spectacles)

- 3 in 1000 720 children need LV care

Can include children with other special needs and with multiple disabilities who also need eye examinations

Do not forget:

- children need low vision care at least once a year: numbers needing services increase

Notes on prevalence and services

- Using best corrected acuity underestimates number needing services
- Kind of services needed: Surgical, optical, health, education and low vision services
- Do not assume surgery and a quality refraction have been done before low vision care!



Low vision care at different levels



Primary: detection, referral



Secondary/tertiary: refraction





Tertiary level: Specialist services
Magnification, vision training; clients with complex needs

‘Low vision’ interventions in eye health facilities:

non optical and environmental adaptions







Nonoptical and environmental adaptions in real life

When non-optical adaptions are **not** advised, obtained, used







When non-optical adaptions are used!





Near vision improvement = access to print = access to local schools



Meer informatie nodig?

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