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Message

Optometry is a promising career for young professionals. Optometrists are independent primary health care providers and represent the front line of vision health and play an important role in early detection and treatment of preventable blindness. In 2005, A.C. Nielsen Company reveals rapidly expanding demand for all types of silicone hydrogel contact lenses, stimulated by continuing new product introductions, according to CIBA Vision reports. For the bi-monthly reporting period ending in February 2005, audited U.S. retail sales of silicone hydrogel lenses increased by 161% over the same period the previous year, driving total soft contact lens sales up 12%. Silicone hydrogels accounted for 19.4% of soft lens retail sales, compared to just 8.3% in January/February 2004. This shows that adoption of Silicone Hydrogel Lenses is accelerating. [1]

Visual impairment is recognized as a public health problem worldwide and has devastating effect on the quality of life of individuals. According to World Health Organization, 285 million people are visually impaired, with 90% of this population living in developing countries.

Globally the major causes of visual impairment are:

- o Uncorrected refractive errors
- o Unoperated cataract
- o Undiagnosed glaucoma

Among these, uncorrected refractive error remains a major cause of avoidable vision impairment and the second most common cause of blindness in India. Reduced vision due to uncorrected refractive error is a major public health problem in urban school-aged children in India. Therefore, some cost-effective approaches are required to eradicate this cause of vision impairment, which can be easily treated. [2]

It has been reported that majority of persons with visual impairment could be encouraged to be self-dependent and to perform the activities of daily living simply by the provision of the requisite spectacles or other optical aid.

Four-year trained optometrists are able to perform comprehensive examination of both the internal and external structures of the eye, carry out subjective and objective tests to evaluate patients' vision, analyse the test findings, and establish a diagnosis.

Role of optometrists

They play an important role in clinical practice while working with Ophthalmologists

They document history, perform clinical refraction, orthoptic workup, evaluate basic binocular vision and measure intraocular pressure using the tonometer and finally advise the patients for dilatation. They facilitate accurate documentation of the entire procedure.

Optometrists evaluate patients requiring a regular eye check-up by refraction and prescribe glasses. Fellowship trained Optometrists dispense contact lenses.

They do visual rehabilitation by providing vision therapy and low-vision aids.

They handle diagnostic equipments automated perimeter, pentacam, iol master, topograph, ultrasound biomicroscope, electrophysiological instruments (VEP). They give binocular vision exercises, handle synaptophore.

They play a very important role in community outreach programmes, they do school vision screening, various camps, mobile eye surgical unit.

I wish delegates and organizers (TwinTech Academy Business Management, Chennai and Global Institutions Erode) for grand success of the event.

References:

1. Industry News. Optometry and Vision Science June 2005, 82 (6): Page 444.
2. Murthy GV, Gupta SK, Ellwein LB, Muñoz SR, Pokharel GP, Sanga L, Bachani D. Refractive error in children in an urban population in New Delhi. Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2002 Mar;43(3):623-31.

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(Awarded The Padma Shri by the President of India in the year 2013)

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