

# WORLD SIGHT DAY

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**8 October 2009**

Pakistan Institute of Community Ophthalmology (PICO) Commemorated the World Sight Day at various levels;

Holding a press conference at Peshawar Press Club on 7th October.

Development of Banners and advertisement in Newspapers

Organizing a seminar on October 8, 2009 at Daud Lecture Hall PICO

Information desk at Hayatabad Medical Complex on October 8, 2009

## **Press Conference:**

PICO organized a press conference at Peshawar Press Club participated by Dr. Aftab Akbar Durani, Chief Executive, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Professor Dr. Nasir Saeed, In charge PICO, and Dr. Mohammad Aman Khan, Executive Director, PICO on October 7, 2009. As result of the press conference the media highlighted messages and information in the news papers on October 8, 2009

In the press conference representatives from different media were enlightened regarding the importance of World Sight Day that why it is celebrated on every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of October. They were also informed about the theme of the World Sight Day 2009 i.e Gender and Eye Health-equal access to care. It was also shared with the media representatives that it is an annual day of awareness on second Thursday of October every year and it focuses on the problem of global blindness and to raise public awareness around the world. While answering to different questions they were informed about the prevailing facts & figures of blindness in Pakistan.

The role of PICO in developing infrastructure and providing trained Human Resource at secondary level and its efforts to decrease the rate of blindness particularly in NWFP was presented by Professor Dr. Nasir Saeed and Dr. Mohammad Aman Khan.

## **Development of Banners and Advertisement in the News Papers:**

PICO used banners displaying the messages and slogans of the World Sight Day and its importance to the Common man. The banners also carried the facts and figures about blindness, and highlighted the theme of the day. These banners were displayed on 11 different places in the Peshawar city. Apart from this PICO prepared a special message on the World Sight Day, depicting its theme i.e. Gender & Eye Health, which was published in various English and Urdu newspapers.

## **Information Desk:**

PICO also developed different leaflets and posters holding information regarding the World Sight Day and its importance. The leaflets also had the facts regarding the prevailing blindness ratio particularly among women around the world and especially in Pakistan. To propagate the world sight day messages more widely with the prime aim to raise awareness, PICO arranged two information desks by the students of PICO Hayatabad Medical Complex. These posters and leaflets were distributed among general health care workers and to general public visiting Hayatabad Medical Complex on that day.

## **Seminar on World Sight Day:**

A half day seminar was organized by PICO on October 8, 2009 at Duad Lecture Hall PICO. Secretary of the Health Department Govt. of NWFP was the chief guest on the occasion.

The Day started with the recitation from the Holy QURAN followed by a welcome address of Dr. Aftab Akbar Durani, Chief Executive HMC. He while describing the importance of the day said that this day is observed to create awareness regarding blindness and visual impairment in general population, professionals and policy makers. He also focused on the efforts made by PICO in Human Resource Development, determining the magnitude and causes of blindness and visual impairment in Pakistan, strengthening eye care services at tertiary, secondary and primary levels and was the nucleus for the advocacy campaign to get resources for piloting innovative eye care program at district and sub district levels.

Professor Dr. Asad Aslam Khan, National Coordinator, Prevention of Blindness Programme gave presentation on the national program of eye health and the development of Punjab Institute of Ophthalmology in coordination with the provincial government.

Dr. Mohammad Aman Khan also gave presentation on gender and blindness and the role of PICO in terms addressing gender issues regarding blindness in Pakistan. He further shared with the participants that female have a significantly higher risk of being visually impaired than male, in every region of the world, and at all ages and the women have low access to eye health care due to numerous reasons.

Dr. Sohail Altaf, Secretary Health, Govt. of NWFP in his speech appreciated the efforts of PICO in holding the seminar and raising awareness regarding blindness and gender. He emphasized that the eye care professionals need to work at two fronts, one to find out the possible risk factors which causing blindness and vision impairment in women in particular and in general population. He added that the provincial government along with the Federal Government and its international partners up graded all the eye departments of teaching and district hospitals in NWFP and FATA regarding infrastructure and other necessary instrument and equipments. He asked the district health care team to make the health care services in general and eye care services in particular accessible and user's friendly and more pro poor and gender sensitive so that women and children with blindness can access and use these services. He further emphasized that reducing the ratio of blindness and visual disability in women & girls particularly will make them economically productive which leads to reduction of poverty fulfilling the millennium development goal 1. He also assured the participants and the national and provincial coordinators that Health Department will try to sanction the relevant posts promised in the PC1 by Federal Government.

At end of all the speeches Prof. Dr. Nasir Saeed ended the session with the vote of thank to all the participants and especial thanks to the Secretary Health for his participation and making the event more valuable.