Eye Health in Timor Leste

Past, Present and Future
Overview of Timor Leste

**Area:** 14,874 sq km (size of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, Central India)

**Population:** 1,124,355 (2010 census)

**Age Structure:**
- 0 – 14 years: 35.1%
- 15 – 64 years: 61.6%
- 65 years +: 3.3%

**Life expectancy:** 66.94 yrs

**Percentage population living below the poverty line:** 49.9% (2007 World Bank)
After independence in 2000 - absence of permanent eye health services, lack of skilled personnel, very limited resources and infrastructure.

In 2000 the RACS East Timor Eye Program began sending specialist medical teams to provide much needed eye care services.

National Eye Health Strategy developed in 2006.

The country’s first ophthalmologist in 2008.

Building commences on the country’s first National Eye Centre in 2008.
2005 Eye Health Survey

- Based on prevalence of annual cataract blindness, more than 2,000 surgeries needed per year

Estimated blindness prevalence of 4.7%

Persons with vision impairment 17.7%

Cataract and refractive error = 90% of vision impairment
National Eye Health Strategy (2006 – 2011)

Equity
1. To improve access to primary eye care, refractive error and cataract surgery services for all

Quality
1. To improve the quality of outcomes of eye care interventions

Acceptability
1. To improve the acceptability of eye care services to patients and the community
2. To increase the level of knowledge on prevention and treatment of vision impairment and eye health
3. To increase awareness and demand for eye care services

Efficiency
1. To promote prevention of blindness activities among the general population, health providers and policy makers
2. To establish clear and relevant guidelines for achieving a properly integrated and coordinated eye health system
Current Eye Health Workforce:

- 4 full time ophthalmologists at HNGV
- 13 eye care nurses, at least one in each referral hospital
- 15 vision technicians
- Refractionists
- Orientation and mobility instructors

Beneficiary eye study showed that cataract surgery provided significant functional and clinical benefits to the blind and vision impaired population of Timor Leste
Audit of Cataract Surgery Outcome

- Good outcome: WHO Guidelines 85%, 2009 - Timor Leste 43.3%, 2010 - Timor Leste 89.4%
- Borderline: WHO Guidelines 10%, 2009 - Timor Leste 6.4%, 2010 - Timor Leste 4.2%
- Poor outcome: WHO Guidelines 5%, 2009 - Timor Leste 12.1%, 2010 - Timor Leste 4.2%
Infrastructure and equipment

- New National Eye Centre
- All referral hospitals equipped to provide cataract surgery
- Telemedicine facilities (early 2011)
- Specially equipped OT Container
Vision rehabilitation services

- O&M training program through RACS V2020 program
- Braille Training provided to teachers
- Vocational training for vision impaired students in Indonesia
By 2020....

- The level of cataract backlog should be at a manageable level.
- The majority of cataract surgery, trauma, refraction and medical ophthalmology services are provided locally.
- There should be a strong cohort of qualified eye care personnel.
- There should be an increased awareness of persons with vision impairment within the community.
- Existing rehabilitation and referral services are improved to a level where VIPs are able to access quality support services.
How do we get there?

Eye Disease Control

- Expand outreach services to reach more remote communities.
- Support of the new National Eye Centre in providing essential clinical services, optical supplies, training, research and policy development.
- Introduction of sub-speciality clinics
- Establishing and equipping a prosthetics clinic
- Improve eye health promotion and education throughout the country
Human Resources:

We need to train:

- 10 ophthalmologists
- 25 ophthalmic nurses
- 50 primary eye care practitioners
How do we get there?

**Infrastructure and equipment:**

- Ensure that essential equipment and consumables are available for effective service delivery
- Expansion of telemedicine facilities
- Improvement of the mobile eye clinic for the outreach program
- Development of a resource library for the new National Eye Centre
- Set up of refractive error facilities at referral hospitals
How do we get there?

Disability Inclusiveness:

- Expand current support for inclusive education for people with vision impairment
- Expand Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Train the Trainer program to other districts
- Support the set-up a Braille production and printing service
- Support sporting and recreational activities for blind and vision impaired.
- Provision of O&M equipment and supplies
- Develop a Resource Skills Centre for people with vision impairment
How do we get there?

Ongoing advocacy and partnerships

- Support the review and development of the new National Eye Health Strategy

- Sustain a productive dialogue and working relationships with the Government of Timor Leste and the eye health sector in pursuit of eye health outcomes under a common strategy

- Develop industry standards and links with regional partners

- Strengthen collaboration and coordination with national and international NGOs working in the eye health sector