



Newsletter March 2024

This month we showcase the recent experience of VOSH-PA in Haiti, welcome a new chapter in Panama, feature great collaborations, a chapter of the month recognition, requests of volunteers, knowledge sharing, and resources you do not want to miss. President Santiago's Insights celebrates the recent World Optometry Week with a pertinent reflection on education and sustainability. Enjoy!!

President's Insights

In celebration of World Optometry Week, President Santiago reflects on the best way to promote continuity and sustainability through the development of optometric education and VOSHers are contributing to that.

Read the whole article in English [here](#) and the Spanish version [here](#).

President's
Insights
March

Optometric
education is one
of our great
assets

WORLD OPTOMETRY WEEK 2024
MARCH 17-21
ADVANCING OPTOMETRY'S COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL EYE CARE

SEMANA MUNDIAL DE LA OPTOMETRÍA 2024
17-21 DE MARZO
AVANZANDO EN EL COMPROMISO DE LA OPTOMETRÍA CON EL CUIDADO VISUAL GLOBAL

SEMAINE MONDIALE DE L'OPTOMETRIE 2024
17-21 MARS
FAIRE PROGRESSER L'ENGAGEMENT DE L'OPTOMETRIE EN FAVEUR DES SOINS OCULAIRES MONDIAUX

News from our chapters

Chronicle of a VOSH-PA clinic in Haiti

Between March 3rd and 8th, a six-person VOSH-PA team organized its latest humanitarian clinic in the north of Haiti. Amidst an evolving security crisis taking place in Haiti, the team examined over 640 patients and managed to leave the country in safety via the Dominican Republic. Read a full account of this humanitarian clinic, the impact on the Haitian students of optometry, and the value of local partners and VOSH chapters [here](#).



From left to right: Dr Mike Satryan, Tech. Crystal Vermeulen, Joseph Telemague, Dr David McPhillips, Savio Fayette, Dr Eugene Maklin, Tech. Victoria Hallberg, Dr Mark Rakoczy, Flavio Fayette, Marc Louissaint, Tech. Melissa Zapotoczny

Welcome VOSH-Leones-Panama

We are delighted to welcome our 108th chapter. VOSH-Leones-Panama is hosted by the Lions Club of Penonomé in Panama and is very active in providing eye health and vision care to those who need it. They run the Municipal Clinic Leones D1 in Panama City, Panama. The President of this chapter is Bernard Digeon and can be contacted at bdigeon77@gmail.com

We extend them a warm welcome.

Bienvenidos!!!



A warm welcome

Una calurosa bienvenida



From left: Dr Yazan Gammoh, SVOSH-AAU-Jordan, Maria Arce, VOSH/International ED, Dr Abou Adela, VCA, Lebanon

Donation of books to schools of optometry in Jordan and Lebanon

On March 6th, in London, VOSH/International Executive Director hand-delivered books donated by **Dr Shehzad Naroo** professor of optometry at Aston University in the UK for the schools of optometry in Jordan and Lebanon. Dr. Yazan Gammoh, faculty adviser of SVOSH-Al-Alhiyya Amman University- Jordan, and Dr. Ammer A. Adela, President of the Vision Care Association in Lebanon received the donation. Thank you, Dr. Naroo!!

SVOSH-IMSU-Nigeria publishes paper on their humanitarian work

Congratulations to the faculty adviser of SVOSH-Imo State University-Nigeria, Dr. Augustine Akujobi, and VOSH/International Research Committee on the publication of a paper on a humanitarian clinic in rural Nigeria organized by this SVOSH chapter with funding of VOSH/International. The paper was published by the

Journal of Optometry and Health Sciences (JOHS) Vol 3, No 1 (2024) and can be downloaded here. Dr Akujobi can be contacted at drakujobi@yahoo.com

Impact of Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) International in a Nigerian Rural Community

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Abstract

Background: The elimination of avoidable blindness and visual impairment requires economic, human and material resources supported by an enabling policy environment. The provision of a qualified workforce and funds for effective humanitarian clinics will address different eyes in the deprivation of primary eye-care services to rural and low income populations. This report highlights the socio-visual anomalies observed in a Nigerian rural community during a humanitarian clinic.

Methods: Temperature check, registration, blood pressure check, case history, visual acuity check, external examination, direct ophthalmoscopy, refraction, tonometry and dispensing of drug and spectacles were conducted by clinicians.

Results: Of the 186 patients examined, 42 (22.4%) had astigmatism, 35 (18.8%) had presbyopia, 20 (10.7%) had cataracts, 10 (5.38%) had glaucoma, 4 (2.15%) had hypermetropia and 4 (2.15%) had dry eye. Six (3.2%) patients had cataract in the right eye, 11 (5.9%) in the left eye and 78 (41.9%) in both eyes. There were 8 (4.3%) diagnosed of cataract, 18 (9.6%) with hyperopia, and 29 (15.6%) with presbyopia. Twenty-four (12.9%) required a distance correction, while 89 (47%) required a near correction. Thirty-four (18.2%) were referred for further eye-care, including those with high amounts of astigmatism or clinically significant anisometropia. Sixty (32.3%) were referred for high blood pressure management.

Conclusions: This report re-emphasizes the need for effective collaboration between optometry schools and volunteer optometric organizations in the provision of primary eye-care services for rural and low income populations in order to curb the enormous burden of socio-visual anomalies and avoidable blindness.

Keywords: VOSH International, Nigeria, Rural Community, Humanitarian Clinic.

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VOSH-MN in Guatemala

VOSH-Minnesota was in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala from January 27 - February 3, 2024. They were hosted by the [Friends of San Lucas Mission](#) and examined over 480 patients. Their local partner is very interested in further eye clinics in their community. Please read the full report [here](#). If your chapter is interested in working in San Lucas Mission in Guatemala, please contact Dr. Sarah Jerome (smjerome@gmail.com) or Dr. Jennifer Bourne (meisterjen@hotmail.com).

Volunteers are needed for a humanitarian clinic in Ecuador

We are looking for 2 more ODs and students for an eye mission to Cuenca, Ecuador. Arrival in Guayaquil on June 3rd with a sleepover at the airport hotel. Travel by bus up to Cuenca on June 4th. The clinic starts on June 5th afternoon until June 8th. June 9th is a free day. The clinic resumes from June 10th to 12th with departure scheduled for June 13th. The Rotary Club is the local host. The team includes 2 ophthalmologists. If interested, please contact Father Pierre Labine at pierre.labine@sympatico.ca

Volunteers needed



June 3rd to June 13th
Cuenca, Ecuador



Do not miss the chance to work with this great team



Partnership between VOSH-FUMVISION-Dominican Republic and VOSH-Southeast offers eye surgeries to Dominicans.

Between March 3 and 9, VOSH-Southeast and VOSH-FUMVISION-DR joined efforts to offer 140 cataract and pterygia surgeries in Santiago, Dominican Republic at the hospital José Maria Cabral y Baez. A great example of collaboration between optometry and ophthalmology.

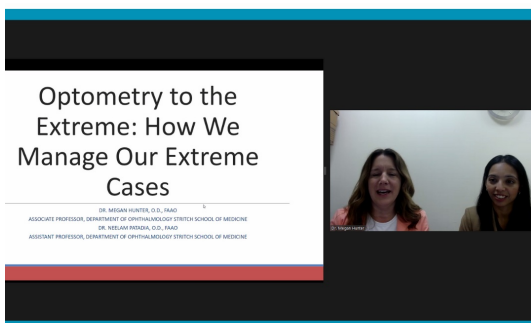


And the chapter of the month is...

SVOSH-PCO has demonstrated unparalleled dedication, passion, and commitment to serving others. This chapter stands out for its teamwork where volunteers can collaborate seamlessly, maximizing impact and fostering a sense of camaraderie among its members. This chapter believes that patience and empathy are crucial when working with vulnerable populations. Congratulations SVOSH-PCO and keep up the good work. The President of SVOSH-PCO is Nicole Trifilio at sosh@salus.edu



News from our partners



Optometry to the extreme

On March 20th Drs Neelam Patadia and Megan Hunter shared their experiences managing extreme cases. This ORBIS webinar had 370 participants from 81 countries. If you missed the session, watch it again [here](#).

Dr Patadia is a Board member of VOSH/International.

A great collaboration with ORBIS that we expect it to grow.



Retinopathy of Prematurity Key Resources

[Prevent Blindness](#) has collaborated with [Hand to Hold](#), [National Coalition for Infant Health](#), and the [SPAN Parent Advocacy Network](#) to develop a range of free new resources to support families of children with

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). These resources were created to educate and support families of children with ROP as well as increase awareness about ROP in the general public. The new resources, available in English and Spanish include fact sheets, a video series for professionals and parents, social media graphics, and a new webpage on ROP is available [here](#).



WCO Competency Framework for Optometry

Developed by the WCO Education Committee, under the leadership of Prof. Henticot and Dr Gammoh, the newly-launched [WCO Competency Framework for Optometry](#) highlights the competencies required for optometry to be an effective actor in the international eye care agenda.

[Visit our Website](#)



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