



## June 2024 Newsletter

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This June President Santiago extends an invitation to our Annual Meeting to be held in Ecuador, we honor the memory of Dr. Kane, provide a brief overview of our midyear meeting held recently in Tennessee, share requests from VOSH chapters going to Mexico and India, highlight research on low vision in Ghana, share resources and invitations from our partners and extend a warm invitation to participate in the production of an E-book. We hope you enjoy this issue and do not forget to send your news/requests to [vosh@vosh.org](mailto:vosh@vosh.org).

President's  
Insights

June

A special invitation  
for October



### President's Insights

This month President Santiago extends an invitation to the whole VOSH network to attend our 2024 Annual Meeting in Quito, Ecuador in person or via Zoom.

Read the article in English [here](#). The Spanish version is [here](#)

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Lois Schoenbrun, Executive Director Optometry Giving Sight (OGS), Dr. Susan Cooper, Chair OGS Canada, Nikki Earich, Director of Development OGS North America, Dr. Hector Santiago, President VOSH/International, and Dr. Howard McAlister, Co-Chair Chapter Relations Committee VOSH/International.



Dr. Hector Santiago, President of VOSH/International with Dr Yazan Gammoh, faculty adviser SVOSH-AAU-Jordan together with fellow World Council of Optometry Board members, Dr. Rajeev Prasad, India and Dr. Michele Ming. during the joint AOSA, WCO, VOSH/International reception.



Dr. Sandra Block, President of the World Council of Optometry, Dr. Hector Santiago, President of VOSH/International, and Dr. Curtis Ono, Member of the Board of Trustees of the American Optometric Association during the joint AOA, WCO, VOSH/International reception on June 21, 2024.



Three leaders working for Haiti. Dr. Mark Rakoczy, President VOSH-PA, Dr Luckson Previl, Director Clinique Memoriale, Dr Maklin Eugene, Director New Hope Hospital. Session on during the Midyear Meeting



**MIDYEAR MEETING**  
**JUNE 22nd 2024**  
**Nashville, Tennessee, USA**

## 2024 Midyear Meeting

Our traditional midyear meeting was held in Nashville, Tennessee on the morning of Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Unlike other years, this time all VOSH chapters were invited to participate in strategic discussions. We thank the attending chapters for their interest and contributions. We thank Dr Susan Cooper of Optometry Giving Sight, a key donor of VOSH/International for her presentation. VOSH is also very grateful to the American Optometric Students Association (AOSA) and the World Council of Optometry (WCO) with which a reception was co-hosted for international delegates attending the American Optometric Association (AOA) meeting. We are excited that our AOA liaison, Dr Curtis Ono, will continue working with us for another year.

## News from our chapters

### Honoring Dr Greg Kane, FVI

Dr Greg Kane, former VOSH-Southeast Board member and active volunteer, passed away recently. Known for his kindness and several trips to Peru and Nicaragua, Dr Kane was remarkable working with children.

Our sincere condolences to his family and members of [\*\*VOSH-Southeast\*\*](#).

The two Nicaraguan boys in the picture received their first pair of glasses from Dr Kane.



In memoriam  
Gregory Lance Kane, OD, FVI  
1952-2024  
VOSH-Southeast former Board member



## optometry for their humanitarian clinic in Mexico

VOSH-Santa Cruz is organizing a humanitarian clinic in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico between November 20<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. This chapter is looking for US or Mexican optometry students to join them.

If you are interested please contact the team leader, Father Pierre Labine at [pierre.labine@sympatico.ca](mailto:pierre.labine@sympatico.ca) or visit their website for more details ([www.voshohv.org](http://www.voshohv.org))

## VOSH-Michigan needs volunteers for a humanitarian clinic in India

In partnership with the Rotary Club of the Taj Mahal, India, VOSH-Michigan is organizing this exciting humanitarian clinic in India. The clinic and site tours will take place between October 9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. The cost per person sharing is \$3,700. Read the whole program and details of the costs [here](#). They are looking for ODs and opticians. If you are interested contact Dr Nelson Edwards at [ngedwards.o.d@gmail.com](mailto:ngedwards.o.d@gmail.com)

**India Immersion Tour | Oct 2024**  
**Rotary Eye Care Mission | Agra India**

**MISSION**  
 To establish in partnership a hospital in every state of India providing free high quality eye care to the rural poor.

**13 Days / 12 Nights**

**Oct 9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> | 2024**

**VISION**  
 To restore the gift of vision to every visually impaired human being, irrespective of nationality, religion or socio-economic status.

**VOSH MICHIGAN**  
 Volunteer Optometrists Serving to Humanity

**Rotary**  
 Rotary Club of Agra Taj Mahal District - 3110

*"Your eyes are priceless take care of them"*

OPTOMETRIC PRACTICE 2024  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2024.2317654>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Low Vision Practice and Service Provision Among Optometrists in Ghana: A Nationwide Survey**

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**ABSTRACT**  
 To characterize practice patterns of low vision services among Optometrists in Ghana. **Methods:** The nationwide cross-sectional survey identified, sent through the Ghana Optometrists Association (GOA) registry and utilized a semi-structured questionnaire to consolidate survey information that captures practitioner demographics, available services, diagnostic equipment, barriers to service provision and utilization, and interventions. **Results:** 207 Optometrists were identified, with 213 responses (77% response rate). About 80% percent (213/267) were in private practice, and more than two-thirds (176) did not provide low vision services. Most (70%) reported lack of assistive devices, and basic eye care examination kits as the main barriers to low vision service provision. Similarly, practitioners reported unavailability of the presence of low vision centers (26.1%), and high cost of low vision aids (75.1%) as the most perceived barriers for patients to utilize low vision services. Congestive professional development and public education (89–90%) were suggested as interventions to improve the uptake of low vision services. After statistical adjustment, private facility type [adjusted odds ratio (AOR) = 3.36, p = 0.019] and lack of basic eye examination kits (AOR = 0.52, p = 0.002) were significantly associated with reduced odds of low vision service provision. Conversely, 3.5 years of work experience (AOR = 0.37, p = 0.011) was significantly associated with increased odds of low vision service provision. **Conclusion:** Overall, the results indicate inadequate low vision coverage and service delivery. Government policies must be directed towards equipping practitioners with equipment and subsidize patient cost of treatment to optimize low vision care.

**Introduction**  
 The increasing burden of eye diseases of refractive and non-communicable origin in Ghana poses a remarkable national health concern owing to the adverse impact on the quality of life and productivity of afflicted patients.<sup>1</sup> Such vision deterioration often results in medical and/or low vision defined by the World Health Organization as visual acuity worse than 6/18 to light perception with optimum treatment or a visual field under 10 degrees from the fixation point. Unlike patients with optimal vision, visually impaired and/or low vision patients experience aberrant visual motor coordination, that eventually result in difficulty in performing everyday activities, mobility and/or transportation challenges, and increased physical dependency.<sup>1,4</sup> Furthermore, several studies have shown a strong association between visual impairment and falls. Particularly, older patients with low vision are more prone to falls as opposed to their age-matched colleagues with healthy vision.<sup>5,6</sup> These patients are at risk of a broad spectrum of psychological distress ranging from depression and anxiety that could potentially accentuate into suicide or death.<sup>7</sup> Low vision and/or visual impairment remains a public health burden with a greater unmet visual need among patients in low resource settings as compared to high income regions. These trends are in part due to decreased doctor-to-patient distribution, inadequate eyecare facilities and medical resources for care given, as well as the relatively high subsidies on medical treatments.<sup>8,9</sup> The prevalence of vision impairment and blindness in Ghana is presently on the rise, yet there remains inadequate low vision treatment and

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## Low Vision practice and service provision among optometrists in Ghana

This survey of over 200 Ghanaian optometrists focused on the provision of low-vision services in this country. Most respondents (77%) did not provide low-vision services often due to a lack of assistive devices and basic eye care examination kits. Patients are unaware of the presence of low-vision centers and the high costs of low-vision aids. Congratulations to Dr Owusu Akuffo, faculty adviser of SVOSH-KNUST in Ghana and former head of the Department of Optometry and Visual Sciences at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, and his colleagues in the USA, China, and Germany who contributed to this paper. Read the article [here](#).

## Contribute to the VOSH/International E-book

Decades of humanitarian work in many places worldwide have resulted in countless human stories that made VOSH volunteers laugh, cry, challenge stereotypes, and motivate them to continue offering eye care to those who need it most. We want to capture those stories in an E-book. All VOSH and SVOSH chapters are invited to contribute their experiences to this initiative. The guidelines and the link for the manuscript submission are in English [here](#), and in Spanish [here](#). Chapters can submit their manuscripts until December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Do not miss this opportunity to share your human stories with the whole VOSH network and partners.

**Invitation to the VOSH/International E-book project**



**We are looking for human stories from your VOSH or SVOSH chapter**

## News from our partners

### Prevent Blindness Summit is around the corner

The [#eyesummit](#) will take place on July 10-11, 2024, as a FREE virtual interactive event. This year's theme – "Being Seen and Heard" – emphasizes the importance of a person-centered approach to vision health interventions, research, communications, and care.

Register [HERE](#)



13<sup>th</sup> Annual Focus on Eye Health Summit  
July 10-11, 2024

**BEING SEEN AND HEARD**

Prevent Blindness  
Focus on Eye Health Summit

The 13th Annual Focus on Eye Health Summit is

- Free
- Online
- Interactive
- Inspirational
- Patient centered

Do not miss it and Register



**THE IMPORTANCE OF A GLOBAL OPTOMETRY STUDENT COMMUNITY**

11 July, 2024 | 7pm (EST) | 2:30pm (WAT)

Dr. Saeed Waleed  
Regional President for Africa, Middle East and Central Asia, VOSH INTERNATIONAL

12 July, 2024 | 5pm (EST) | 5pm (WAT)

Dr. Hesham Hoda Ali Elgendy  
Regional President for Africa, Middle East and Central Asia, VOSH INTERNATIONAL

13 July, 2024 | 5pm (EST) | 10pm (WAT)

Dr. Hector Santiago  
CEO, ALCON

14 July, 2024 | 10:30pm (ACST) | 2pm (WAT)

Dr. Uchechukwu Levi Ogunyemi  
Regional President for Africa, Middle East and Central Asia, VOSH INTERNATIONAL

### OPTOGLOBE Student Summit

Students of optometry are invited to register in this series of webinars to explore the significance of fostering a global optometric student community. VOSH/International is proud to support this effort and encourages students from all SVOSH chapters to register. The webinars will take place between 11th and 14th July.

July 11th Asia. Register [here](#)

July 12th North Africa and the Middle East. Register [here](#)

July 13th North and South America. Register [here](#)

July 14th Anglophone Africa, Australia, and Europe. Register [here](#)

### The WCO & ALCON partnership for Dry Eye Disease Education

Following two years of successful collaboration, the WCO Alcon Dry Eye Wheel has been updated to include content about diet, dietary supplements, in-office, and complex treatments. The Dry Eye Wheel and related resources are available [here](#).



## Important Resources



### World Refugee Day and Health

Each June 20<sup>th</sup>, the world celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. World Refugee Day is organized by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. The World Health Organization (WHO) in line with this year's theme "**Solidarity with Refugees**", emphasized the importance of building inclusive health systems and ensuring equitable care for refugees worldwide. Important resources can be found [here](#), and the Refugee and Migrant Health Toolkit is [here](#).

There are 120 million people displaced in the world. In 2023, two US VOSH chapters organized clinics for recently arrived refugees to the US. Show solidarity whenever you can.

Visit our Website



VOSH/International | 12660 Q Street | Omaha , NE 68137 US

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