

Charity Foundation Will Set Up 100 Cataract Centers in China by 2015

Although economic reform in China has resulted in a tenfold increase in gross domestic product (GDP) since 1978, the country's cataract surgical rate (CSR; ie, the number of cataract operations per million citizens per year) is among the lowest in the world.¹ As of December 2006, China, with a population of approximately 1.3 billion, had a CSR as low as 380, according to data from the Vision 2020 Global Declaration.¹ China has more than 5 million citizens with bilateral cataract blindness, which comprises approximately 18% of the world's blind population.²

The primary reason for the low CSR in China is the gap between the demand for cataract surgery in villages and the supply and cost of service in cities. Service is not available in the villages and not affordable for rural dwellers in the city. This creates a city-village barrier that prevents rural residents from receiving cataract surgery.

To tackle China's low CSR and address the city-village barrier, Dennis S. C. Lam, MD, FRCOphth, FHKAM, created the Project Vision Foundation in Hong Kong in 2006. "The objective of Project Vision is to establish financially sustainable charity eye centers in rural areas where local doctors are trained to provide quality cataract surgery at an affordable price to their home community," Dr. Lam wrote in an e-mail to *Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today Europe*. Dr. Lam is a Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

To date, 14 charity eye centers (including six from the Caring-is-Hip program, the pilot design for Project Vision) have been established in four rural provinces of China, including Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Guangdong, and Hainan. More than 15,000 cataract operations have been performed. By 2015, Project Vision hopes to establish 100 sustainable charity eye centers, reaching residents in the most remote areas of the country.

For every 1 million Hong Kong dollar donation (approx-

mately €100,000), a charity eye center is set up at a county hospital in collaboration with the local government. Each center is equipped to serve a treatment area of 1 to 3 million citizens. The hospitals provide basic facilities and support for the charity eye centers. Patients are charged reduced fees for cataract surgery, making the procedure affordable for rural residents.

With donations to the Project Vision Foundation, equipment and medical supplies are purchased for the centers. Cost efficiency is achieved by purchasing consumables in bulk, minimizing administrative expenses, and reducing taxes on various imported equipment, Dr. Lam explained.

In the future, Dr. Lam wants to expand the foundation's surgical capabilities. "We hope to go beyond cataract blindness and offer treatments for other prevalent sight-threatening conditions, such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, to those who reside in the rural villages of China," Dr. Lam told *CRST Europe*. Following the establishment of more charity eye centers in China, Dr. Lam plans to apply the same model in other developing countries. "The Project Vision cataract surgeons and our patients are starting to see some light at the end of a long, dark tunnel of avoidable blindness in China," he said. "'Give a man a fish, he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, he eats forever.' These words capture the essence of Project Vision—a self-empowerment scheme that can enable professionals around the world to help millions of blind people see the beautiful world again."

For more information on the Project Vision Foundation, to learn how you can volunteer, or to make a donation, please visit www.projectvision.org.hk.

1. Implementation of Vision 2020 objectives by WHO region at December 20. Available at: <http://www.who.int/blindness/Pages%20from%20Vision2020%20-report.pdf>. Accessed May 19, 2009.

2. Yan L. Overview of preventing visual impairment by fighting against avoidable blindness in China. *Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal*. 2006;34(17):34-42.

Post-LASIK Quality of Life Study Reports High Patient Satisfaction

An analysis of the global peer-reviewed literature found that more than 95% of patients were satisfied with the

outcome of their LASIK surgery.¹ The retrospective literature review was done in preparation for a prospective study to be conducted by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), and the National Eye Institute. Both the completed retrospective study and the future