



Ophthalmic | Program Fact Sheet



Assan & Alusan, Liberia
Cataract Removal



Desire, Benin
Conjunctivitis



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,
Benin, Cataract Removal

*Lives transformed
through hope
and healing...*



Surgery Ward



Cataract Operation



Patch Removal



Post-Operative Exam



Training

Blindness and Visual Impairment in Developing Countries

Eye conditions, treatable in their early stages in developed countries, are frequently left untreated in the poorest parts of the world and often lead to impairment or blindness. The majority of blindness is curable and could be avoided by prevention and early treatment. Blind persons in developing countries are often ostracized, considered outcasts in their communities. Even worse, most blind children do not survive past the age of five.

Cataract

Outside developed countries, cataracts remain the leading cause of avoidable visual impairment. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens which impedes the passage of light. Although most cases of cataract are related to the aging process, occasionally children can be born with the condition, or cataracts can develop after eye injuries, inflammation, or as a result of ocular diseases. Cataract surgery is one of the most cost-effective treatments that can be offered in developing countries.

Statistics

- 36 million people are blind worldwide. (Source: Lancet Global Health 2017)
- At present at least 2.2 billion people around the world have a vision impairment, of whom at least 1 billion have a vision impairment that could have been prevented or is yet to be addressed. (Source: WHO)
- Rates of unaddressed near vision impairment are estimated to be greater than 80% in Western, Eastern and Central sub-Saharan Africa. (Source: World report on vision. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019)
- 51% of the world's blind suffer from cataracts. (Source: WHO)

Transformational Healthcare through Eye Care Programs

Mercy Ships aims to prevent blindness among the most vulnerable by offering free education on nutrition, eye safety, and good hygiene at all its eye screening sites. School screening programs have been successfully implemented with government partnerships to provide early detection, prevention, and treatment of childhood blindness including severe refractive error correctable with glasses.

Mercy Ships volunteer ophthalmic surgeons perform free, vital eye operations to restore patients' sight and improve their quality of life.

Ophthalmic Surgery

Cataracts are the most common cause of avoidable blindness worldwide. However, most incidents of cataract blindness are curable, and sight can be restored with a low-cost, sutureless technique. Mercy Ships cataract operations are performed using the latest methods and technology. Mercy Ships eye surgeons perform procedures to correct pterygium (growths on the cornea of the eye), strabismus (crossed eyes), and eyelid deformities, and to replace painful or disfiguring blind eyes with prostheses.

Training & Capacity-Building

In addition to the surgical focus, Mercy Ships provides training opportunities for local surgeons and eye care professionals. This training will help build the in-country capacity to provide eye care services.

Accomplishments

Since 1978, Mercy Ships has provided over 53,300 ophthalmic life-changing surgical procedures and performed more than 380,000 eye consultations.