



Vision and eye screening implementation handbook

Information Sheet

Vision and eye screening in primary health care – why is it important?

Vision and eye screening in primary health care plays a pivotal role in global eye care initiatives by facilitating early detection of various eye conditions, enabling timely intervention and management to prevent vision impairment and complications. The WHO resolution “WHA73.4, Integrated people-centred eye care, including preventable vision impairment and blindness”, emphasizes the integration of eye care into universal health coverage, underscoring the significance of these screenings in a comprehensive healthcare approach. The Vision and eye screening implementation handbook (hereinafter referred to as the “VESIH” or the “handbook”), is focussed on establishing practical, evidence-based screening programs for different age groups, from neonatal to older adults. These screenings not only aim to detect eye diseases but also to ensure that individuals are seamlessly connected to appropriate care pathways at different levels of healthcare facilities, thereby promoting equitable access to eye care services.

What is the Vision and eye screening implementation handbook?

The handbook offers step-by-step guidance for conducting vision and eye screenings in community and primary care settings. The evidence-based interventions are drawn from the [WHO Package of eye care interventions \(PECI\)](#) and developed with a focus on delivering screenings easily, safely, and effectively in low- and low-intermediate-resource settings. Early identification through screenings enables prompt interventions, ensuring timely treatments and management to avoid vision impairment in high-risk populations, including newborns, pre-school children, school children, and older adults. To further support country approaches, the VESIH incorporates a section on the advantages and disadvantages of diverse vision and eye screening approaches. Additionally, various pathways for refraction and spectacles service delivery are outlined, along with actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing refractive error services. The VESIH serves as a comprehensive guide for effective vision screenings in diverse settings, contributing to [WHO SPECS 2030](#), in particular, to improve access to refractive services.

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Why do we need a Vision and eye screening implementation handbook?

The handbook provides a standardized framework, ensuring consistent and reliable vision and eye screening practices across various settings. By emphasizing evidence-based interventions, it ensures that screening methodologies align with global standards, promoting reliability and accuracy in screenings. Crucially, it aids in integrating vision and eye screening into existing health and education programmes, promoting equitable access to eye care services. Ultimately, the handbook serves as a resource facilitating better access, standardization, and improvement in eye care services globally.

Who are the intended users of the Vision and eye screening implementation handbook?

The handbook is designed to assist a wide array of stakeholders involved in eye care provision, including coordinators within Ministries of Health, public health planners, managers, NGOs dedicated to eye care, and notably, personnel working within primary health care facilities that will provide and promote vision and eye screening services.

How will the Vision and eye screening implementation handbook be used?

Tailored for a diverse audience, it equips Ministry coordinators with strategies to integrate vision and eye screening into national policies, aids planners and managers in implementing effective programs, and supports service providers aligning with WHO recommendations. Crucially, the handbook offers practical guidance specifically geared toward primary health care facilities, detailing screening protocols, recommended screening tests and referral strategies, thereby ensuring that these frontline healthcare settings can seamlessly integrate vision and eye screening initiatives into their operations, ultimately enhancing access to quality eye care services at the community level and primary levels.

How was the Vision and eye screening implementation handbook developed?

The handbook has been developed through a consultative and evidence-based approach and is built on the work of the PECEI. In total, 114 public health, academic and clinical professionals from 45 countries contributed to the development of the PECEI. The PECEI separated the population for screening into high-risk populations including the neonatal period, children and adolescents, and older adults. This handbook has taken these populations and further developed them by performing a thorough analysis of evidence compiled in the PECEI for each defined age group and expanding on the recommendations made in the PECEI to develop the handbook. The handbook was validated through review and input from 10 PECEI technical working group members and other key experts, representing the 6 global regions.

For further information, please contact: Vision and eye care Programme, World Health Organization, Geneva

Or visit the website: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/blindness-and-vision-loss>

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