

Trachoma Control and Prevention of Blindness

Trachoma Control and Prevention of Blindness project was launched in 1964. At that time trachoma was main cause of blindness in Myanmar and active trachoma rate was 43% in trachoma endemic areas (central Myanmar). With the concerted effort of the project and support of Government, WHO, UNICEF and NGOs, active trachoma rate was reduced to under 1.2% in 2005. As trachoma blindness is greatly reduced, cataract becomes main cause of blindness in the country.

Prevention of Blindness (PBL) project is promoting the activities to increase the cataract surgical output both in quality and quantity. PBL also commenced activities to eliminate trachoma in Sagaing, Shwebo and Monywa districts (in Sagaing Division) in 2003.

Ocular Morbidity Survey (1998)

Blindness rate 0.6%	
Main Cause	Percent (%)
■ Cataract	63
■ Glaucoma	16
■ Posterior segment diseases	7
■ Trachoma	4
■ Corneal opacity	3
■ Trauma	1
■ Others	6

WHO has laid down the strategy "Vision 2020, the Right to Sight: Elimination of avoidable blindness" and Myanmar Prevention of Blindness project is trying the best to fight against avoidable blindness.

Prevention of Blindness project has 16 secondary eye centers in Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing (lower part) and Bago (east) divisions headed by ophthalmologists with field staff. The project is covering 18.1 million people in 79 townships of those 4 divisions with the national objective to reduce blindness rate to less than 0.5%.

Strategies

- Improving cataract surgical rate and quality of surgery
- Making Primary Eye Care available to all BHS and eliminating the avoidable blindness.
- Promotion of community participation.
- Provision of cataract surgical services at affordable price and free services to poor patients.
- Providing outreach services

Services Provided by the Project

Type	Activities
Promotive (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greening of Central Myanmar ■ Improving water supply
Preventive (for Trachoma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Village and school eye health services ■ Tetracycline eye ointments for trachoma patients ■ Trichiasis surgery (field) ■ Referral of other eye diseases
Curative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Medical and surgical services for trachoma and other eye diseases (field and base)
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Primary Eye Care Training (basic and voluntary health workers and NGOs)
International Eye banks (Yangon and Mandalay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Procurement, ■ Quality control & ■ Distribution of corneal tissue
Operational Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rapid assessments of cataract surgical service in 9 townships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of blindness • Coverage of cataract surgical service • Outcome of cataract surgery ■ Rapid assessments of trachoma in Mandalay and Magway in 2006 to identify pocket area for elimination of trachoma
Low cost Eye drop Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Done at Prevention of Blindness programme (Meiktila) with the help of Christoffel- Blindenmission



Community Participation of Outreach Cataract Surgical Service

Accomplishments in 2006

■ Cataract surgery	20447
■ Glaucoma surgery	2596
■ Other major surgery	873
■ Other minor surgery	14094
■ Trichiasis surgery	4897
■ No. of eye drop bottles produced	37000
■ Free of Charge Cataract Surgery	948
■ No. of villages examined	1794
■ No. of population examined	324857
■ No. of schools examined	974
■ No. of students examined	152549



School Eye Health Examination



Village Model Eye Health Examination

Eye Health Examination at Home for the Aged