

Do you have a story to tell?
100–200 word 'nuggets'

Community Eye Health is introducing a forum for exchange of inspiring experiences and insights in community eye care. If you have achieved something exemplary, or learnt something interesting in your work, please send us a short description in no more than 200 words. Descriptions might include how you have increased the rate of cataract surgery, implemented ophthalmic practice to improve patient care, designed training programmes, promoted community action to prevent blindness, learnt something from your patients, etc. Please send your contributions to:

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The International Resource Centre wishes all our readers a happy and productive 2004



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Why do women carry the greater burden of blindness, and what can be done?

The first international conference on women and blindness addresses the problem

“Improving Women’s Eye Health: Strategies to Address the Greater Burden of Blindness Among Women” was the title given to a conference in Boston in November 2003. Public health policy makers, health care providers, scientists, organisations for the blind, and vision experts from around the world gathered to explore why women are nearly twice as likely to lose their vision as men and how to stem the tide of blinding diseases in women. The extent of the problem of blindness in women became clear with the publishing of a meta analysis of more than 70 epidemiological studies on blindness conducted over the past 20 years, which showed that women accounted for most of the world’s blind.¹ In addition, World Health Organization (WHO) statistics indicate that two-thirds of people suffering from visual impairment are women. Scientists theorise



Blind women await attention

Photo: Sue Stevens

that longevity, smoking, nutrition, and environmental factors may be causing increased eye disease in women in developed nations, while poverty, infectious disease, and lack of access to health services are contributing to the statistics in developing countries.

The conference was sponsored by the *Women’s Eye Health Task Force*, an organisation based at **Harvard’s Schepens Eye Research Institute**.

www.eri.harvard.edu/wehtf

¹ Abou-Gareeb I, Lewallen S, Bassett K, Courtright P. Gender and blindness: a meta-analysis of population-based prevalence surveys. *Ophthalmic Epidemiol* 2001; 8(1): 39–56.

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE

Department of Infectious & Tropical Diseases

MSc Community Eye Health

Dates: 27 September 2004 - 16 September 2005
Fees: £12,960



Also available part-time, Terms 1 & 2 (September 2004 - March 2005) and then Term 3 (April 2006 - September 2006)

Community Eye Health and Vision 2020

Advanced 14-week short course (certificate course)
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