**IAPB**

**Regional Report**

**REGION: Europe**

**PERIOD OF REPORT: April 2020 – August 2020**

1. **List any key outcomes from the region resulting from IAPB engagement and advocacy**

* Unfortunately, all the planned regional and national celebrations of the end of VISION 2020 and the launches of the new World Report on Vision were cancelled or postponed due to the virus pandemic and lockdowns in Europe.
* The preparation of the European myopia management guidelines is underway.

1. **List any key outcomes from the region resulting from member work and advocacy**

**Vision 2020 The Netherlands:** The Dutch government approved full financial support for a 3-year trial in which district nurses perform eye screening in home healthcare patients (*'Online nurse-assisted eye-screening in home health care: implementation and socio-economic evaluation (the iScreen study'*). Sixty percent of frail elderly home healthcare patients in The Netherlands do have an ophthalmologic condition. Although a large number was already known in eye health care, >20% was referred with an unrecognized ophthalmologic problem (see at the end). Basic ophthalmologic screening by home healthcare nurses might be a potential tool to reduce the burden of avoidable age-related vision loss. The study is a combined effort of 3 Dutch university clinics and will be coordinated under supervision of the VISION 2020 *Netherlands* board. It is the first time since 2003 that VISION 2020 *Netherland*s is recognized by the government as scientific partner.

1. **List any key events that have occurred in the region (IAPB and Members)**

* Most of the events were cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic since April 2020.
* **However there were some virtual meetings regarding Europe**
* Symposium on Emerging threats to managing the global burden of eye disease: how to access this data, modify our disease-control strategies and monitor outcomes? at WOC Virtual 2020 – organized by Jost Jonas and Rupert Bourne
* ICO instructional course on International Myopia Institute white papers findings – addressing the increase in myopia globally at WOC Virtual 2020 – organized by Monica Jong and Serge Resnikoff
* **Upcoming European meetings**

On 4th June 2021 VISION 2020 *Netherlands* and the IAPB Board organize a national congress for 250 eye doctors, ophthalmic nurses, optometrists, patient organizations etc. on avoidable visual impairment. During the congress, the World Report on Vision will be officially launched in The Netherlands. Guest speakers include prof. Janos Nemeth and prof. Serge Resnikoff. Guests of honour who confirmed their attendance are the Dutch VISION 2020 patron HRH Princess Margriet of The Netherlands (aunt of the reigning monarch) and her husband, the King's Commissioner, the President of the Senate in The Hague and the chairman of the National Health Council in The Hague.

1. **List any new evidence that has been created and disseminated in the reporting period**

* **Integrated People-Centred Eye Care (IPEC)**

World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution on **IPEC** has been adopted by all member states of WHO. This decision strengthens the WHO’s global strategy on eye care and a very important and significant news for all the leaders of the National Societies of Ophthalmology in Europe! IAPB Europe distributed this information to our main partners and to the European National Societies of Ophthalmology. This WHA Resolution opens the way to advocate for and to implement of the WHO World Report on Vision program in their own country. Now, it is a suitable way for the National Ophthalmological Societies to make a step forward for the improvement of eye care services in their own country and advocate and discuss with their Ministry of Health along this WHA Resolution.

* **Myopia**

The preparation of the European myopia management guidelines by the European Society of Ophthalmology (SOE) and other invited experts from Europe and IMI is in progress. The publication of the guidelines is planned in an academic journal next year.

* **Important European publications**

# Bikbov et al. Prevalence and causes of vision impairment and blindness in the Russian ural eye and medical study. Sci Rep. 2020; 10: 12397.

# Ibanez-Bruron et al. Epidemiology of visual impairment, sight-threatening or treatment-requiring diabetic eye disease in children and young people in the UK: findings from DECS. Br J Ophthalmol. 2020; doi: 10.1136/bjophthalmol-2020-315886.

# Lestable et al. Twelve-month outcomes of intra-vitreal anti-VEGF agents for treatment-naïve neovascular age-related macular degeneration eyes: French data from the fight for retinal blindness! registry. J Fr Ophtalmol. 2020; doi: 10.1016/j.jfo.2019.11.016.

# Lupón et al. Public knowledge of low vision and blindness, and readability of on-topic online information. J Optom. 2020; doi: 10.1016/j.optom.2020.06.005.

# Navel et al. COVID-19 and macular edema: a necessarily blindness? Graefes Arch Clin Exp Ophthalmol. 2020; doi: 10.1007/s00417-020-04838-x.

# Tóth et al. Rapid assessment of avoidable blindness-based healthcare costs of diabetic retinopathy in Hungary and its projection for the year 2045. Br J Ophthalmol. 2020; doi: 10.1136/bjophthalmol-2020-316337.

# Tunay et al. Causes of severe visual impairment in infants and methods of management. Eye (Lond) 2020; doi: 10.1038/s41433-020-1101-z.

# van Nispen et al. Reducing avoidable visual impairment in elderly home healthcare patients by basic ophthalmologic screening. Acta Ophthalmol. 2019; 97: 401-408.

1. **List any new key challenges in the region (political, environmental, economical, etc) that have created barriers to IAPB and/or its Members achieving its objectives in the region**

* **Coronavirus** (COVID-19) pandemic is a huge burden worldwide and also in Europe. The second wave of the pandemic is here in the autumn of 2020.

**6. List any challenges and/or opportunities that have presented themselves in the region due the COVID-19 pandemic.**

During the first wave of the pandemic most of the eye clinics have postponed elective surgeries and non-urgent outpatient appointments and examinations. Most of the meetings, congresses and IAPB activities are also restricted, cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. However, it seems, that pandemic has not affected the emergency eye care. We submitted an article recently to Klinische Monatsblatter für Augenheilkunde on this topic which is currently under revision:

Tóth G, Xanthopoulou K, Stachon T, Németh J, Hécz R, Berkó-Göttel B, Pfuhl T, Smola S, Seitz B, Szentmáry N. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on emergency inpatient volume at a tertiary eye care center in Germany with corneal main specialization.

**7. List any new advocacy efforts or initiatives led by members as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Hungarian examples of particular practices of some rehabilitation and education institutes which might be typical responses to the pandemic also in other European countries:

The **educational institutions started online distance teaching** as the government closed the on-site teaching in all schools, colleges and universities. The transition to online education was a central order issued by the ministry. The central regional educational offices set the main guidelines, and the schools developed their own.

1. This transition (including teaching/learning and also the examinations) was smooth in the university and college teaching vision rehabilitation based on the good infrastructure of the university and college.
2. The schools of blind and low vision children started also online teaching using different methods based on the different possibilities of the children at home: PC, messenger, viber, skype, by phone and by post (sending teaching materials). In some small villages the pupils need to go to the local library or major’s office if this is the only place where internet connection is available. More difficult is to teach children with multiple disabilities as the possibilities of the online communication with them is very limited. In these cases, the school is trying to support the families and support them.

Some schools rented laptops, optical/ electronical equipments to those children where the family asked this. Beside digital online teaching (by Google Classroom, different chat surfaces, messenger, skype, viber, etc). A school developed a blog advising suggestions for parents how to develop their children at home, and also a library blog.

The **vision rehabilitation** centers continued the already started vision rehabilitation for those who are actually residents in the center. However, rehabilitation of others (at their home or visiting daily a center) has to be suspended due to safety reasons of the residents and the staff. Some distance online trainings are still possible i.g. informatic modul. Some centers call by phone their clients who are at home.

The national and regional **organisations of blind and low vison people** organized the home office work for the majority of their service persons, but some of them still work in their usual workplace, so the services are going without changes.

They are continuously looking for the changes in legal regulations and working accordingly. They are in direct contact with the ministry and the governmental cabinet. They inform their members by newsletter and on their facebook site.

An **NGO** example of adaptation to the new COVID situation was the following: They had to stop the vision screening program and started new actions: They provided donations (face masks, medical equipments, food packages, laptops) for hospitals and families in need. They promoted and organized blood donation, as well.

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