



December 2005

International Council of Ophthalmology /
International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies

IFOS/ICO Programs, Initiatives and Services

About IFOS and the ICO

The International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies (IFOS) represents and serves professional associations of ophthalmologists throughout the world.

The International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) is the executive body and operational arm of IFOS.

The ICO is dedicated to preserving and restoring vision for all people worldwide and to serving the current and future needs of ophthalmologists and the public.

ICO Programs, Initiatives and Services

Listed on the following pages are the primary ICO programs, initiatives and services, along with addresses on the ICO Web site where you can find out more, including how to contact those responsible for each activity.

Background:

International Ophthalmology's *Vision for the Future*

From 1999 to 2001, the International Council of Ophthalmology, Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis and representatives of other vision-related organizations met in a series of conferences to define a strategic plan for international ophthalmology.

The resulting *Vision for the Future: International Ophthalmology Strategic Plan to Preserve and Restore Vision* identified critical needs for ophthalmic education, guidelines for eye care, advocacy and research in order to decrease avoidable vision loss and blindness around the world. (www.icoph.org/prev/plan.html)

Vision for the Future is supportive of and complementary to the VISION 2020: The Right To Sight initiative (see below), and IFOS is a member of the VISION 2020 Task Force.

The ICO is coordinating implementation of the *Vision for the Future* and has set up Committees and task forces with various responsibilities, many of which have evolved into the programs and initiatives described below.

I. ICO's Primary Programs for Ophthalmologists:

International Council of Ophthalmology

Bruce E. Spivey, MD, Secretary-General

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Fax: (+1) 415 409-8403 E-mail: info@icoph.org Web: www.icoph.org

Assessments, Fellowships, Guidelines and Congresses

ICO International Assessments for Ophthalmologists (www.icoph.org/assess)

Each year, the ICO offers examinations throughout the world to help ophthalmologists evaluate and demonstrate their knowledge in the basic and clinical sciences related to ophthalmology.

Coordinated by Peter Watson, FRCS, FRCOphth, the ICO International Basic Science Assessment for Ophthalmologists and International Clinical Sciences Assessment are broadly accepted and used in a variety of ways by national organizations and residency programs.

More than 10,000 ophthalmologists have taken the ICO International Assessments since 1995, including nearly 1200 candidates who sat for the Assessments in 2004 at 84 test centers in 59 countries around the world.

The Assessments are offered early in April each year, and the deadline for application is January 31 of that year.

IFOS/ICO International Fellowship (www.icoph.org/fellow)

The IFOS/ICO International Fellowship was established in 2001 to help young ophthalmologists, especially those from developing nations, improve their practical skills and broaden their perspectives of ophthalmology.

The Fellowships generally last three months, and fellows are expected to bring the acquired knowledge and skills back to their country of origin and take part in programs to preserve and restore vision in their country.

Under the leadership of Fellowship Coordinator and ICO Treasurer Balder Gloor, MD, 151 IFOS/ICO Fellowships have been awarded since 2001. Fellowships are now available from 60 ophthalmology departments and programs in 24 countries.

Deadlines to apply for IFOS/ICO International Fellowships are March 31 and September 30 of each year.

ICO International Clinical Guidelines (www.icoph.org/guide)

Vision for the Future called for the development of guidelines to define specifically what constitutes appropriate eye care and to promote achievement of a universal high standard of quality.

Recognizing that “appropriate eye care” is resource dependent and based on the culture, economic environment and health services system of a region or country, the ICO has defined International Clinical Guidelines that are intended to serve a supportive and educational role for ophthalmologists worldwide, with the goal of improving the quality of eye care for patients.

There are 19 International Clinical Guidelines currently available, with additional Guidelines in preparation covering the most prevalent eye conditions and diseases

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around the world. Ten of them have been translated into Chinese. ICO Guidelines Coordinator is Richard L. Abbott, MD.

World Ophthalmology Congress (www.icoph.org/congress)

The XXX World Ophthalmology Congress (formerly called the International Congress of Ophthalmology) is scheduled February 20 - 24, 2006 in São Paulo, Brazil, the week before Carnival (www.ophthalmology2006.com.br).

First held in Brussels in 1857, the Congress features a comprehensive scientific program focused on the latest advances in ophthalmology and eye care, presented by world leaders in research and clinical practice.

The Congress offers ophthalmologists and others involved with vision varied opportunities for international exchange of information and education, including symposia, scientific sessions with themes, live surgery demonstrations, courses, workshops, poster presentations and free papers.

Future World Ophthalmology Congresses are scheduled in Hong Kong (2008), Berlin (2010) and Chicago (2012).

II. Initiatives in Ophthalmic Education

Education Committee and Task Forces (www.icoph.org/ed/icoed.html)

Vision for the Future emphasized the critical role that international ophthalmology could play in the education of ophthalmologists and other eye care providers to meet public needs around the world.

Mark O. M. Tso, MD, chairs the ICO's Education Committee, which has multinational task forces focused on defining curricula and guidelines for:

- Ophthalmology residency education
- Ophthalmology continuing education
- Allied ophthalmic personnel training
- Medical student education in ophthalmology.

As the curricula and guidelines in each area are defined, the Education Task Forces will focus on their dissemination and encouraging and supporting implementation in different parts of the world.

Curriculum for Ophthalmology Residency Training (www.icoph.org/ed/icoresident.html)

One of the task forces of the ICO Education Committee has issued revised "Guidelines and Standards for Education of an Ophthalmologist: A Curricular Outline."

Drafted by Morton F. Goldberg, MD, and Andrew G. Lee, MD, for the ICO's International Task Force on Ophthalmology Residents and Specialist Education, the Curriculum Guidelines cover basic, standard and advanced levels of ophthalmic

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training. For each level, the Curriculum Guidelines define cognitive skills and technical skills for each of 14 clinical conditions and for ophthalmic practice in general.

An extensive appendix suggests general references (books) and journal articles on key studies in each clinical area for recommended and additional reading.

Curriculum for Medical Student Education (www.icoph.org/ed/icomed.html)

The ICO International Task Force on Ophthalmic Curriculum on Medical Student Education, which is chaired by Richard K. Parrish, MD, has developed "International Curriculum Guidelines in Ophthalmology for Medical Students."

The Curriculum proposes a range of standards for medical student education, including ophthalmic cognitive and clinical skills for medical students and the time allotment for ophthalmic education in medical schools.

Curricula for Training Allied Personnel

The ICO Education Committee's Task Force on Para-Ophthalmic Vision Specialists Education is evaluating curricula for training allied eye care personnel from around the world and will recommend model curricula to the ICO.

The Task Force is chaired by Sivaguru Selvarajah, FRCS, FRCOphth, FACS.

Guidelines for Continuing Medical Education (Professional Development)

The Task Force on Ophthalmology Continuing Education, chaired by Zbigniew Zagorski, MD, is developing "Principles and Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)." The Guidelines will be posted on the ICO Web site.

Support for Training Ophthalmologists in Nigeria

(<http://www.icoph.org/ed/nigerianews.html>)

In spring of 2004, Council members visited residency programs and met with ophthalmologic leaders and the Minister of Health in Nigeria. Since then, ICO leaders and Nigerian ophthalmologists have defined responsibility for short-, medium- and long-term action to be taken to strengthen residency training.

There has been significant progress on implementation. For example, with financial support provided by the ICO and ICO Foundation and logistical support from the World Health Organization (WHO), Residency Resource Centers with broadband Internet connections have been established in each of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Also, a grant of \$200,000 from Carl Zeiss to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) is supporting the establishment of a regional training center and cataract demonstration project in Ibadan, Nigeria.

This pilot project in Nigeria is intended to provide a model and inspiration for initiatives to enhance residency training elsewhere in West Africa and around the world.

Courses for Directors of Residency Programs

In June 2004, Enrique Graue, MD, a member of the Advisory Committee to the ICO, organized an Ophthalmology Program Directors Course in Mexico. There were more than 80 participants, including an international faculty and residency program directors from 20 residency programs throughout Mexico.

Participants agreed that the course was a great success and similar courses are being scheduled in other parts of the world.

For more information, contact Dr. Graue at: egrauew@yahoo.com.

Atlas of Ophthalmology (www.atlas-of-ophthalmology.com)

The ICO has endorsed the *Atlas of Ophthalmology*, an online multimedia database edited by Robert Machemer, MD (Durham, USA) and Georg Michelson, MD (Erlangen, Germany).

A helpful learning tool for ophthalmologists and students worldwide, the Atlas makes photographs related to more than 1000 ophthalmic diagnoses available through the Internet free of charge.

III. Research

Research Agenda for Global Blindness Prevention (www.icoph.org/research)

Chaired by Alfred Sommer, MD, the ICO Research Committee has defined opportunities for operational and epidemiologic research that would benefit underserved populations of poor countries.

The Committee's "Research Agenda for Global Blindness Prevention," which has been endorsed by WHO, concentrates on the seven ocular diseases and conditions that cause the greatest vision disability in the largest number of individuals around the world:

1. Cataract
2. Trachoma
3. Onchocerciasis
4. Xerophthalmia
5. The Glaucomas
6. Diabetic Retinopathy and Age-Related Macular Degeneration
7. Refractive Error.

IV. Standards

International Standards for Vision and Eye Care (www.icoph.org/standards)

ICO Committee on Standards Chairman Jean-Jacques DeLaey, MD, and Standards Committee Member August Colenbrander, MD, a drafted a report on "Vision Requirements for Driving Safety" (www.icoph.org/standards/driving.html).

The report recognizes the profound impact vision requirements for driving have and the need to make them more uniform around the world. It evaluates:

- current visual requirements for obtaining a driver's license in various countries
- the literature on the relationship between vision and driving safety, and
- ways to assess different visual functions that relate to driving ability.

In 2002, the ICO and IFOS adopted a resolution on "Visual Standards - Aspects and Ranges of Vision Loss" (www.icoph.org/standards/visionres.html) to encourage consistent measurement and reporting of vision loss in population surveys around the world.

The World Health Organization is incorporating parts of the ICO's resolution into the revised *International Classification of Diseases - ICD-10*.

V. Advocacy, Representation and Policies

Advocacy for Preservation of Vision (www.icoph.org/prev)

Vision for the Future also stressed the important role that international ophthalmology can play as an advocate for preservation of vision, including raising awareness worldwide of the economic, social and personal impact of vision loss and the need for increased funding and other support.

Hugh Taylor, MD, is interim ICO Advocacy Coordinator.

Vision 2020: The Right To Sight (www.icoph.org/prev/2020.html)

IFOS is a member of the Task Force of "VISION 2020: The Right To Sight," an international initiative with the goal of eradicating preventable blindness around the world by the year 2020.

"VISION 2020: The Right To Sight" was organized in 1999 by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, World Health Organization and various Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGOs).

The ICO has encouraged ophthalmologic societies to support the "VISION 2020: The Right To Sight" campaign in their countries and to participate actively in the World Sight Day, the second Thursday in October each year.

Representation of Ophthalmology Internationally

IFOS is the only ophthalmologic organization with an official relationship with the World Health Organization and was one of the founders, along with the World Blind Union, of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

The ICO also maintains formal and informal relationships with and represents ophthalmology to a variety of organizations that have an impact on ophthalmology, eye care and vision around the world.

Policies and Positions on Vision and Eye Care Issues

As part of its advocacy efforts, the ICO has adopted and promoted policies and positions on issues related to eye care around the world, including:

- Advocating "twinning:" ongoing collaboration and cooperation between ophthalmologic institutions and organizations in developed and developing countries (www.icoph.org/soc/twin.html)
- Urging the mandatory inclusion of ophthalmology in the curriculum for all medical schools (www.icoph.org/soc/medical.html)
- Encouraging ophthalmology departments to allocate at least five percent of the positions in their training programs to individuals from countries where there is an undersupply of ophthalmologists (www.icoph.org/soc/training.html)
- Supporting a total ban on antipersonnel landmines (www.icoph.org/soc/ban.html)
- Advocating the inclusion of statistics on vision loss and blindness in all WHO and almanac publications.

VI. Support for Ophthalmologic Societies and other Services

The Eye Site (www.icoph.org)

The ICO's Web site, the Eye Site, is a world atlas for eye care: a guide to finding information, education and resources related to ophthalmology and vision around the world.

Coordinated by ICO Secretary General Bruce E. Spivey, MD, the Eye Site offers information on ICO and IFOS, ophthalmologic organizations, ophthalmic education and preservation and restoration of vision, as well as resources for ophthalmologic societies, ophthalmologists and the public.

The ICO Leader Letter (www.icoph.org/news/letters.html)

In April 2004, the ICO started publication of the *ICO Leader Letter*, a monthly e-mail newsletter to IFOS representatives and other ophthalmologic leaders worldwide. The *Leader Letter* is designed to offer news of ophthalmology and the ICO and resources that will be valuable to international leaders.

Paul Sieving, MD, PhD, director of the U.S. National Eye Institute, called the *Letter* a "significant advance in communicating international needs, opportunities and achievements to a broad audience."

IFOS/ICO Newsletter (www.icoph.org/news/newsletter.html)

Edited by P. N. Nagpal, MD, the IFOS/ICO Newsletter offers news of the ICO and international ophthalmology in an eight-page printed newsletter that is distributed to

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IFOS societies and elsewhere throughout the world once a year. All issues can be downloaded from the Eye Site.

The Council has encouraged national societies to seek grants to cover the cost of printing and distributing the IFOS/ICO Newsletter to all ophthalmologists in their countries, particularly where many do not have Internet access.

Database of Societies and Residencies (www.icoph.org/soc/database.html)

The ICO maintains the most comprehensive listing of information on ophthalmologic societies and ophthalmology residency programs throughout the world.

The society and residency information can be accessed on the Eye Site at <http://www.icoph.org/soc/ifos.cfm> and updated by society leaders with a user name and password available from the ICO.

Directory of International Ophthalmology

Periodically, the ICO publishes a listing of the most recent information in its database of ophthalmologic societies and ophthalmology residency programs (above) in a book.

The ICO sends the *Directory of International Ophthalmology* to members of IFOS, and it is available for sale to others from the Secretary General (info@icoph.org).

Information contained in the database and the *Directory of International Ophthalmology* is copyrighted by the ICO and can be used only with its permission.

ICOFoundation (www.icofoundation.org)

The International Council of Ophthalmology Foundation was formed in 2002 to advocate preservation and restoration of vision through education, quality eye care and research. To that end, the ICOFoundation seeks financial support for measures to prevent, alleviate and eliminate the loss of human vision.

Chaired by Bradley R. Straatsma, MD, the ICOFoundation is focused initially on obtaining support for:

- Ophthalmic education and training
- Ophthalmic knowledge assessment
- Ophthalmic fellowship training
- Eye and vision care guidelines
- Advocacy for preservation of vision
- Research in ophthalmology and vision.