

新聞稿 PRESS RELEASE



TO EDITORS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 1996

Survey Shows Unsatisfactory Vision Health Among Hong Kong Children
CUHK Establishes "Fight for Sight Foundation"

A vision screening project carried out by the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Prince of Wales Hospital shows that the vision health status of local pre-schoolers is not satisfactory .

The project surveyed 623 pre-school children, aged two to seven last year at the TWGH Liu Yan Tak Memorial Kindergarten and TWGH Tsui Tsin Tong Kindergarten. More than 20% of the screened children are suffering from significant refractive errors (short-sightedness, long-sightedness and astigmatism), anisometropia, squint or lazy eye.

" If leave unattended, they may develop other vision problems. Hence, early vision screening for pre-school children is urged," said Dr Dennis S C Lam, Associate Professor of Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Chief of Service, Ophthalmology Service, Prince of Wales Hospital.

The most striking finding is the high prevalence of astigmatism. 25% of these children have astigmatism of one diopter (100 degrees) or more. For similar age groups, this figure is among the highest in developed countries (Figures elsewhere range from 10 to 24%). Animal and human studies have shown that uncorrected significant astigmatism could cause short-sightedness and lazy eye.

Dr Lam explained, short-sightedness is a very common vision disorder in Hong Kong. It is a hybrid of nature and nurture. Uncorrected astigmatism will cause a blurry image, which may affect the growth of the eye ball and result in short-sightedness. The high prevalence of astigmatism in pre-schoolers may be a major predisposition to developing high prevalence of short-sightedness in school children in Hong Kong. Spectacle correction for those with higher degree of astigmatism may help to prevent the development of short-sightedness.

Delayed treatment for squint and lazy eye can also cause irreversible vision loss.

Meanwhile, The Chinese University of Hong Kong announced the establishment of the " *Fight for Sight Foundation*" in Hong Kong, dedicated to those in the territory with eye diseases and other vision impairments.

"Life expectancy of Hong Kong, along with expectation for an enhanced quality of life, has developed in parallel. The need for eye care has greatly increased in the last few years."

"With this background, we have launched the Foundation to accelerate the developments of resources so that we can offer the community enhanced eye care programmes. It is our sincere hope that this will bring happiness and relief to many people who may otherwise be faced with vision impairments or blindness."

The main objectives of the Foundation are:

- . to develop and provide better eye care programmes for Hong Kong people.
- . to advance the standards of clinical services in eye care in Hong Kong.
- . to develop community outreach programs and to educate the public on the importance of sight - saving programmes.
- . to develop eye research and educational programmes at the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- . to develop hi-tech modalities of therapy and foster new drug development; to conduct basic science study and clinical trials in Hong Kong.
- . to provide a centre of rehabilitation for the visually handicapped
- . to develop and nurture eye care professionals in Hong Kong and China

The Foundation's first fund-raising event will be on August 17, 1996, with a movie premiere of "The Mad Phoenix". Other fund-raising activities planned include Walk for Sight, Fight for Sight Foundation Ball, Fight for Sight Chinese Opera show and Fight for Sight Bazaar.

For enquiries, please call Ms Cheung Man-yi of Information & Public Relations Office at 2609-8896.