



THE HIGH COST OF LOW VISION: The Evidence on Ageing and the Loss of Sight

Key Facts and Figures

Prevalence of Vision Loss

- **285 million** people are visually impaired worldwide.
- **94 million** older people in developing countries suffer from moderate to severe visual impairment.
- **39 million** people are totally blind worldwide.
Source: World Health Organization
- Wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD) is the **leading cause of legal blindness** in older people in Western societies. With proper access and awareness, much of this vision loss is preventable. (*Skaat et al., 2012*)

Costs of Vision Loss

- Compared to those without, people who experience vision deterioration are nearly **three-times as likely** to need skilled nursing and be admitted to long-term care facilities. (*Javitt et al., 2007*)
- Vision loss leads to **decreased productivity** and among the visually impaired there are high rates of absenteeism and premature retirement. (*AMD Alliance International, 2010*)
- In the region anchored by the United States and Canada, the productivity loss of absenteeism due to visual impairment in 2010 has been estimated at **nearly \$97 billion**. (*Access Economics and AMD Alliance International, 2010*)

Cost-Effectiveness of Prevention

- **80 percent** of the causes of visual impairment globally are preventable. (*Pascolini and Mariotti, 2012*)
- Patients with vision loss have higher non-vision-related health costs, estimated to be **between \$2,000 and \$4,500** per patient.

Health Consequences of Vision Loss

- Nearly **one-third of people with vision loss** suffer from clinical depression, a rate that is twice as high as the general population of adults of the same age. (*Javitt et al., 2007*)
- Injuries from falls are common with visually impaired patients, and they tend to stay in the hospital **nearly 2.5 days longer** than patients with normal vision. (*Morse et al., 2009*)

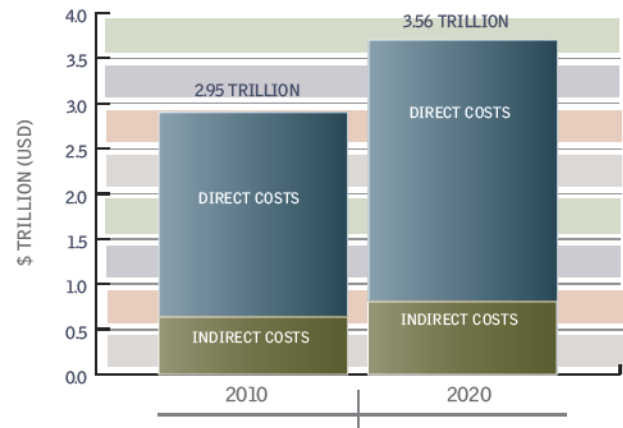
Global Population Ageing

- In 2012, the over-60 population numbered 810 million but is expected to grow to **2 billion** by mid-century.
- Globally, nearly **58 million people turn 60 every year**, with two people celebrating their 60th birthday every two seconds.

Source: UNDESA, Population Division

WORLDWIDE COSTS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Source: AMD Alliance International, 2010



GROWTH OF GLOBAL 60+ POPULATION

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision

