



Report on Tracking Universal Health Coverage Adopts Cataract Surgical Coverage as Key Indicator

Influential new report co-authored by the WHO and the World Bank identifies a small set of indicators to track and monitor Universal Health Coverage. IAPB's recommendation – Cataract Surgical Coverage – among the thirteen health intervention indicators listed.

Immediate Release: Cataract Surgical Coverage (CSC) is a reliable indicator for availability of health services in many countries, especially to the elderly. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) strongly recommends CSC data as one viable indicator for health service coverage, as it is supported by data over time and geographies.

IAPB welcomes a new, seminal report that the World Bank and World Health Organization have just published – "[Tracking Universal Health Coverage - the First Global monitoring report](#)" -- to measure health service coverage and financial protection to assess countries' progress towards universal health coverage (UHC). The report promotes thirteen indicators for monitoring health intervention coverage, including cataract surgical coverage.

In [a press release](#) accompanying the launch of the report, Dr. Ties Boerma, Director of the Department of Health Statistics and Information Systems, World Health Organization said, "As more countries make commitments to universal health coverage, one of the major challenges they face is how to track progress. The report shows that it is possible to quantify universal health coverage and track progress towards its key goals, both in terms of health services and financial protection coverage."

"I am delighted that IAPB's efforts to promote the importance of cataract surgery have been recognised by the inclusion of CSC as a viable indicator for monitoring UHC in this extremely influential and important report", said Peter Ackland, CEO, IAPB. "I believe including CSC would also strengthen the indicator framework being developed to monitor target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals which focuses upon UHC.

This first-of-its-kind report looks at global access to essential health services and promotes thirteen indicators for monitoring health intervention coverage and outlines a further six possible indicators related to financial protection measurement to track catastrophic and impoverishing health expenditure. The majority of the proposed indicators build on existing monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. Five new indicators, including CSC, relate to the need to monitor the rising tide of Non-Communicable Diseases – which account for some 55% of the global disease burden.



It is also encouraging to note that amongst the thirteen indicators there is also one that relates to Neglected Tropical Diseases – preventive chemotherapy coverage, which includes the prevention of two blinding diseases - onchocerciasis and trachoma both of which could be eliminated over the lifetime of the SDGs.

IAPB congratulates the teams at WHO and the World Bank for producing an authoritative – and accessible - report. Surely, the tools and approach will prove crucial to achieving UHC and for ensuring equitable and strong health systems across the world. IAPB also thanks all the individuals and organisations - especially Hans Limburg, Specialist, Community Eye Health - whose support and advice has helped us in this process.

Notes to Editors:

About IAPB

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) is the coordinating membership organisation leading international efforts in blindness prevention activities. IAPB's mission is to eliminate the main causes of avoidable blindness and visual impairment by bringing together governments and non-governmental agencies to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of sustainable national eye care programmes. Please visit: www.iapb.org

WHO Blindness Prevention Facts

- About 285 million people are visually impaired worldwide: 39 million are blind and 246 million have low vision (severe or moderate visual impairment)
- Preventable causes are as high as 80% of the total global visual impairment burden
- About 90% of the world's visually impaired people live in developing countries.

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