

Agenda Item: Revised Duties of Ophthalmic Assistants under National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB)

Brief note on revised duties of Ophthalmic Assistants under NPCB

Ophthalmic Assistants are key functionaries in implementation of National Programme for Control of Blindness, specially at primary level in the country. There is no structured cadre of Ophthalmic Assistants/Paramedical Ophthalmic Assistants in the country at present. NPCB is a national programme looking after the duties of Ophthalmic Assistants participating in a large scale at various eye care units in implementation of blindness control activities since inception of programme in the country.

The Duties of Ophthalmic Assistants were formulated at the time of introduction of the National Programme for Control of Blindness during the year 1978 as under:-

Original Duty Chart of Ophthalmic Assistant

- Train staff at peripheral level in eye-care
- Treat the patients for eye ailments
- Test vision and prescribe glasses
- Assist Mobile Units in conducting eye-care camps
- Survey the community for early detection of eye defects
- Organise community education.

Since Ophthalmology is primarily a surgical speciality, it became mandatory that only highly skilled, fully trained eye doctors perform the surgery by using modern sophisticated equipments to avoid any sort of complications and subsequent litigations.

Therefore, the original duty chart of Ophthalmic Assistants was modified in subsequent years. It was also felt that primary treatment of all eye ailments does not fall under the purview of Ophthalmic Assistants. The revised duties of Ophthalmic Assistants prepared in the year 1992 for implementation under NPCB as under:-

Modified duty chart of Ophthalmic Assistants

- Test vision and prescribe glasses
- Assist Medical Officer PHC in providing primary eye-care including treatment for trachoma, conjunctivitis and associated infections
- Assist Mobile Unit in conducting eye-care camps.
- Survey the community for early detection of eye defects.
- Organise community eye-care education activities.
- Train staff at peripheral level.

This change in Original Duty Chart has created a lot of resentment and agitation among Ophthalmic Assistants over the years. Hence, it was decided to revise the duty Chart, in a high level national committee involving technical experts, representative of Ophthalmic Assistants and others concerned to consider and decide the duties of Ophthalmic Assistants under NPCB.

The matter was discussed and deliberated in detail in National Level expert committee meetings. The modified duty chart recommended by the National Level Technical Committee is as under:-

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY AT PRIMARY LEVEL

1. Screening and identification of eye diseases at Primary level:
 - a) Cataract
 - b) Uncorrected refractive errors
 - c) Glaucoma
 - d) Childhood blindness
 - e) Diabetic retinopathy
 - f) Squint
 - g) Trachoma
 - h) Corneal opacity
 - i) Uveitis
 - j) Screening for colour vision (not for issuing certificate)
2. Treatment/ Medical intervention at Primary level (PHC) of the following common eye diseases
 - a) Trachoma
 - b) Conjunctivitis
 - c) Allergies of eye lids and conjunctiva
 - d) Dry eye
 - e) Eyelid problems (blepharitis, stye, chalazion)
 - f) Vitamin A Deficiency
 - g) Lacrimal system Disorder,
 - h) Superficial corneal abrasion
3. Usage of following medications
 - a) Mydratics
 - b) Cycloplegics drugs for refraction
 - c) Topical anaesthetics for diagnostics
 - d) Basic antibiotics, pain killers, antihistaminics, antialergics
4. Refraction & prescription of spectacles,
5. Dispensing of spectacles
6. Identify, initiate primary medical treatment (as per the protocol) and refer to an Ophthalmologist immediately in the following emergency cases:
 - a) Chemical burns
 - b) Perforating injuries of eyeball or lids
 - c) Corneal infections
 - d) Glucoma
7. Minor surgical procedures
 - a) Epilation for Trichiasis
 - b) Superficial foreign body removal
8. Enucleation of the eye in cornea donation after proper training
9. Follow up of post operative cases
10. Referral
11. Health education and training at Primary level:

For all Primary level functionaries and Volunteers

12. Organization and management at Primary level

- a) Documentation
- b) Counseling
- c) Screening camps
- d) School eye health
- e) Health education sessions
- f) Coordination with other departments (ICDS, social justice, primary health)
- g) Tele-ophthalmology
- h) Epidemics

Role & Responsibility at Secondary Level

In the out patient department

1. Record complaints, history, preliminary anterior segment eye examination
 2. Assessment of vision
 3. Refraction : Manual & automated
 - a. Dilatation for refraction
 - b. Prescription of glasses
 4. Tonometry (shiotz, applanation, non-contact tonometry)
 5. Evaluation of lacrimal duct patency
 6. Visual fields testing
 7. Diplopia and hess charting
 8. Binocular vision testing
 9. Contact lens fitting, Low vision aids trial after getting appropriate training
 10. Non invasive investigating techniques after training from a recognised institute
 11. Prosthetic eye implant fitting
 12. Coordination with primary level
- 13. Pre-operative work up**
1. Slit lamp examination
 2. Biometry: A Scan, Keratometry
 3. Blood pressure
 4. Checking blood sugar

Operation Theatre & Wards

14. Independently

1. Administration of pre and post operative medications and counselling
2. Sterilization of instruments, equipments
3. Setting up of surgical trolley and other equipments

15. Under Supervision

1. Administration of local anaesthesia under supervision of ophthalmic surgeon
2. Intramuscular and intradermal injections
3. Assist in surgery: draping of the patient, handing over instruments and handling surgical supplies

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Ministry of Health and FW
Directorate General of Health Services
Ophth/BC Section

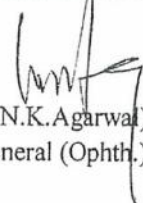
Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated 19.8.2010

Subject: Constitution of a Committee of Experts to consider and formulate the revised duties of Ophthalmic Assistants under the National Programme for Control of Blindness.

In supersession of this Ministry's letters of even number dated 26.4.2010 and 22.6.2010, it has been decided to re-constitute the Committee of Experts under the Chairpersonship of Ms. Shalini Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to consider and formulate the revised duties of Ophthalmic Assistants under the National Programme for Control of Blindness consisting of the following members:

1	Ms. Shalini Prasad, Joint Secretary, MoH&FW	Chairperson
2	Dr. N.K. Agarwal, Deputy Director General (Ophth.), Dte.GHS	Member
3	Dr. A.S.Rathore, Assistant Director General (Ophth.), Dte.GHS	Member Secretary
4	Principal, School of Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi	Member
5	Prof. Madan Mohan, former Adviser Ophthalmology and Chief, Dr. R.P.Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi	Member
6	Director, Guru Nanak Eye Hospital, New Delhi	Member
7	Dr. K.P.S. Mallik, Addl. DGHS, Dte.GHS	Member
8	Under Secretary (NCD), MoH&FW	Member
9	Dr. V.Rajshekhkar, Dy. Assistant Director General (Ophth.), Dte.GHS	Member
10	Executive Director, Vision 2020: the Right to Sight	Member
11	Dr. J.S.Thakur, Representative of WHO dealing with Blindness Control	Member
12	Director, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Member
13	Director, Arvind Eye Hospital, Madurai, Tamil Nadu	Member
14	Ms. Elizabeth Kurian, Country Director, Sightsavers International	Member
15	Principal, School of Optometry, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Member
16	Education Director, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad (AP)	Member
17	Director, Orbis International	Member
18	Senior Anaesthetist, Dr. R.P.Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi	Member
19	State Programme Officer (NPCB), Maharashtra	Member
20	State Programme Officer (NPCB), Madhya Pradesh	Member
21	Sh. R.S.Berwal, General Secretary, National Ophthalmic Association	Member
22	Sh. Mohanjit Singh, Member, National Ophthalmic Association	Member

The Terms of Reference of the Committee would remain the same.


(Dr. N.K. Agarwal)
Deputy Director General (Ophth.)

To

All Members of the Committee

Copy to:

1. PPS to Secretary (H&FW)
2. PPS to DGHS
3. PPS to JS(NCD)
4. PPS to DDG(Ophth.)