



香港眼科醫學院

# World Glaucoma Day — the Hong Kong Perspective

Dexter Y. L. Leung, FRCS, FHKAM (Ophthalmology)

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the World Glaucoma Day — Hong Kong Chapter

## Correspondence and reprint requests:

Dexter Y. L. Leung, 2/F, Hong Kong Eye Hospital, 147K, Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong. E-mail: dextleung@netvigator.com

World Glaucoma Day (WGD) is a joint initiative of the World Glaucoma Association ([www.globalaigs.org](http://www.globalaigs.org)) and the World Glaucoma Patient Association ([www.worldgpa.org](http://www.worldgpa.org)) to raise awareness of glaucoma, encourage regular screening for early detection, and manage the disease for a fulfilling and productive life for patients. The initiatives for WGD are highly relevant to the local setting. Glaucoma is still one of the main causes of permanent blindness according to the database of the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong. It is desirable to disseminate more knowledge about glaucoma via public educational talks, as well as via the media. It is important that the public understand the role of regular eye screening in relation to detection of glaucoma. In a recent large study of more than 4000 participants, more than half of the individuals with incident glaucoma were unaware of their diagnosis, highlighting the importance of comprehensive examinations for disease detection.<sup>1</sup> These researchers also found that this lack of awareness was 4 times more likely when optometrists or opticians were the regular eye care source for these patients compared with ophthalmologists. We think it is important to let the public know that such screening should be performed by ophthalmologists. There are several reasons to support this recommendation. Firstly, ophthalmologists appreciate the relevance of structure-function correlation

in glaucoma, and thereby avoid the pitfalls of relying on glaucoma diagnostic imaging alone to detect the disease. Secondly, ophthalmologists in Hong Kong are aware of the high prevalence of angle-closure glaucoma and narrow angles in this region.<sup>2,3</sup> Ophthalmologists are in the best position to examine and manage the angles. Lastly, ophthalmologists are aware of the systemic associations of open angle and normal tension glaucomas.<sup>4</sup> Only a profession with full medical training would recognize systemic hypertension and hypotension, vasospastic disorders, obstructive sleep apnea syndrome, and others.

The Hong Kong Ophthalmological Society and the College of Ophthalmologists of Hong Kong have taken steps to support World Glaucoma Day. We will have a Joint Public Education Program to be held at the Grand Century Place, Mongkok, Kowloon, on 2 March 2008 (Sunday), at 10:00 am. Invited ophthalmologists from the private, public, and academic sectors will give educational talks to participants. There will be poster sessions and free screening for glaucoma risk factors. A press conference will be held with a celebrity artist as our Glaucoma Ambassador. Hong Kong will be proud to take part in this global initiative to reduce undetected glaucoma to less than 20% by 2020. We sincerely appeal for your support!

## References

1. Hennis A, Wu SY, Nemesure B, Honkanen R, Leske MC; Barbados Eye Studies Group. Awareness of incident open-angle glaucoma in a population study: the Barbados Eye Studies. *Ophthalmology*. 2007;114:1816-21.
2. Lam DS, Tham CC, Lai JS, Leung DY. Current approaches to the management of acute primary angle closure. *Curr Opin Ophthalmol*. 2007;18:146-51.
3. Lam DS, Leung DY, Tham CC, et al. Randomized trial of early phacoemulsification versus peripheral iridotomy to prevent intraocular pressure rise after acute primary angle closure. *Ophthalmology*. 2007 Dec 26; [Epub ahead of print]
4. Leung DY. Hong Kong Medical Diary. *Med Bull*. 2007;12:16-7.