

Subspecialty – Prevention of Blindness



Dr Gillian Clover (New Zealand)

• Ophthalmic Services for Diabetic Retinopathy in Island Nations of the Pacific

Dr Clover is based in Blenheim, New Zealand, and is involved in establishing sustainable eye services in the Pacific Islands. Her talk at APAO Sydney will focus on the work being done to train local staff, with a particular emphasis on diabetic eye health.

“The development of screening for diabetic retinopathy commenced in Fiji a decade ago and has recently been enhanced by equipment upgrades in Suva and Lautoka and the re-establishment of services in the Central Division Health Services in Fiji.”

“In 2010, a very successful inaugural six-month duration Diabetes Eye Care Certificate (DEC) course for nurses and allied health professionals was held by the Pacific Eye Institute (PEI). In 2011, the PEI commenced a Postgraduate Diploma course in the Management and Treatment of Vitreoretinal Eye Disease for Pacific Island-based ophthalmologists. This course provides extensive clinical experience in laser treatment – particularly of diabetic retinopathy.”

“Diabetes Retinal Screening, Management and Referral Guidelines for use in the Pacific Island Nations (2010) have been developed and agreed by PacEyes. These guidelines aim to ensure a uniform grading system, consistency and safety of practice, and to establish standards. The most prevalent technology used for screening is mobile, digital, non-mydratic retinal photography, but indirect and direct ophthalmoscopy is encouraged in locations unsuitable for photography or slit lamp biomicroscopy.”

“Screening services occur in full collaboration with general diabetes services or in combined clinics. In 2010, a total of eight nurses from the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and the Central and Western Divisions of Fiji graduated with the Diabetes Eye Care Certificate and are now undertaking screening work at their locations of origin.”

Dr Clover will also discuss the outcomes of screening, the difficulties in patient conformity and the challenges in establishing and sustaining eye services in these regions.

Note: All effort has been made to check facts with each presenter. The writer accepts responsibility for any inadvertent errors in transcript.