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Dr. Rohit Varma of CHA HPMC's Southern California Eye Institute Publishes Study in The Lancet Global Health on Inequities in Global Access to Vision Care

New Global Study Highlights Gaps and Gains in Vision Care Access

Los Angeles, CA – May 29, 2025 - [CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center](#) (CHA HPMC), a member of CHA Health Systems, a global network providing a full spectrum of dynamic healthcare services, is proud to announce the Founding Director of its state-of-the-art eye institute, [Southern California Eye Institute](#). Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, has published a landmark study in *The Lancet Global Health*, revealing both encouraging progress and persistent inequities in global access to vision correction, particularly the availability of quality eyeglasses.

The study, led by the Vision Loss Expert Group and including over 815,000 participants from 237 eye health surveys in 76 countries, found that 65.8% of adults aged 50 and older in need of refractive error correction had received effective care by 2023 - up from 59.8% in 2010 and 55.6% in 2000.

Despite this progress, stark disparities remain:

- In high-income countries, effective coverage reached 84.0%.
- In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa recorded only 28.3% coverage.
- Women and older adults consistently experienced lower rates of vision correction across all regions.

The World Health Organization's 2030 target aims for a 40 percentage-point increase in effective refractive error coverage (eREC), especially in countries with lower baseline rates. However, the current pace of improvement is insufficient to meet this goal.

"Providing eyeglasses remains one of the safest, most cost-effective health interventions to improve quality of life," said Dr. Rohit Varma, a senior author of the study. "Enhanced access to vision correction can dramatically impact educational attainment, employment opportunities, and social equity."

More than 160 million people worldwide have correctable vision impairment due to uncorrected refractive error. The study calls for urgent action to address these gaps, particularly through:

- Integrating vision care, including eyeglasses, into national health insurance schemes.
- Expanding innovative delivery models to reach underserved and remote populations.
- Prioritizing equity-focused interventions to improve access among women and older adults.

This analysis supports the global effort to advance eye health as a critical component of universal health coverage and sustainable development. CHA HPMC is proud to advocate for improved access to essential vision services and reaffirms its commitment to equitable eye care for all.

About CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center

[CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center](#) (CHA HPMC) is a nationally recognized acute care facility that has cared for Hollywood and its surrounding communities since 1924. Today, CHA HPMC offers comprehensive health care services with a 434-bed acute care facility, including 89 skilled nursing beds. The hospital has a medical staff of more than 550 physicians and specialists, representing 69 specialties and

75 different countries. CHA HPMC embraces the area's diverse, multicultural patient populations by providing all who walk through its doors quality care in a compassionate manner. It is a member of CHA Health Systems, a dynamic global healthcare organization that provides a full spectrum of services in seven countries around the world, including 91 hospitals and clinics, 30 research and 14 education institutions and 31 bio/pharmaceutical/healthcare companies. For more information about CHA HPMC, visit <http://www.hollywoodpresbyterian.com>.

About Southern California Eye Institute

[Southern California Eye Institute](http://www.sceyes.org) is dedicated to providing the highest level of vision care, using the latest technology and treatments to deliver the best outcome to patients in Los Angeles and from around the world. The institute's expert physician-scientists are advancing innovations in stem cell and regenerative therapies, artificial intelligence and bioelectronic implants to further the prevention, early detection and treatment of eye diseases and conditions. Founded by world-renowned ophthalmologist Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, SCEI is located in Los Angeles at CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center. For more information, visit www.sceyes.org.

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