

National Eye Centre Community Eye Care Programme: A 5 year Pilot Project in Igabi LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Background: National Eye Centre (NEC) Kaduna has been a technical partner for the implementation of Kaduna State Eye Care Programme funded by Sightsavers over the past two decades. However, since the withdrawal of funding from this donor organization, eyecare service provision hitherto implemented on a community basis became limited to hospital-based services at a relatively higher cost and limited geographical coverage. Potentially, worsening the barrier to needed eyecare services access and considerably halting burden reduction efforts of the leading but avoidable causes of blindness like cataract and glaucoma in previously targeted communities of Kaduna State^[1,2]. Therefore, the National Eye Centre Community Eye Care Programme (NECCECP) will be implemented to demonstrate the provision of effective, efficient and sustainable community based eye care services in a low resource setting.

Aim: To control blindness from avoidable causes in Igabi LGA of Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Specific objectives:

1. To provide integrated, comprehensive, community-based eye care from 2016 to 2020.
2. To strengthen institutional capacity and build partnerships for the prevention and control of avoidable causes of blindness.
3. To train and retrain primary health care workers in Igabi LGA in prevention, promotion and control measures of eye care services.
4. To reinvigorate community engagement and participation for sustaining eyecare service demand and ownership of the programme

Methods: The NECCECP design is hinged on the eight priority areas of the National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP) namely: Leadership and Governance, Service Delivery, Human Resources for Health, Health Financing, Community Participation and Ownership, Partnerships for Health, Health Management Information System and Research for Health. The implementation process shall be a 5-year comprehensive eye care programme, which will be carried out with a referral system linking community, primary, secondary and tertiary health levels in Igabi LGA of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The major activities shall include baseline surveys on causes of blindness, community outreaches, health education, school eye health, and surgeries at secondary and tertiary levels. A technical programme management committee shall provide leadership for the programme, which will be guided by an advisory Committee that will include, selected community leaders among other key stakeholders.

Table 1: NECCEP expected outcome of eyecare service delivery and human resource capacity development (2016-2019) in Igabi LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Intervention	Targeted number of beneficiaries
Cataract Surgery	5000
Glaucoma case finding	8500
Screening for childhood blinding diseases	50000
Screening and refraction	2700
Screening for diabetic retinopathy	2500
Training of Community Volunteers (Case finders)	140
Training of Community Health Workers	75

Expected outcome and impact: NECCEP is expected to: train 75 CHEWS, 140 Case finders, and 140 school teachers. In the area of service delivery, the programme targets 5000 cataract surgeries to be performed and evaluation of 8500 adults for glaucoma among other interventions (See Table 1. for details of programme targets)

Conclusion: The implementation of NECCEP will be complemented by a strict monitoring and evaluation mechanism aimed at reduction of burden of blindness in Igabi LGA, which is in line with WHO global action plan and vision 2020 "The Right to Sight"

References

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2. Rabiou MM, Kyari F, Ezelum C, Elhassan E, Sanda S, Murthy GVS, Sivasubramaniam S, Gilbert C, Nigeria National Blindness and Visual Impairment Study Group. Review of the publications of the Nigeria national blindness survey: Methodology, prevalence, causes of blindness and visual impairment and outcome of cataract surgery. *Annals of African Medicine* Vol. 11, No. 3; 2012