

Press Release

[For Immediate Release]

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Pediatric ptosis can be dangerous, occur in both eyelids maybe the symptoms of serious illness.

Ophthalmologist at Orbis Blindfold Lunch urges to raise awareness on Ptosis

In its efforts to continually raise local students' awareness about the importance of eye health and the world's serious blindness issues, Orbis Hong Kong organizes the annual Orbis Blindfold Lunch with the full support of AXA Foundation. On May 2, a special event was held at Rosaryhill School with a hundred of primary students donning blindfolds to experience the difficulties the visually impaired face when carrying out simple tasks like eating lunch. VIP Guest at the event, **Orbis Volunteer Ophthalmologist Dr. Emmy Li**, warned about an important condition called ptosis is taking on children. She went on to urge both students and their parents and teachers do all they could to raise eyecare awareness.

Ptosis-related dropping eyelids may herald far more worrying medical problems

The latest U.S. data shows one case of ptosis for every 842 live births in U.S., Dr. Li added that clinically, there are about 10 new cases in Hong Kong each year; just two of them require urgent treatment. She pointed out that pediatric ptosis can cause serious visual problems if not diagnosed and treated properly. The primary cause is dystrophy of the levator muscles that raises eyelids. Affected eyelids may press on the cornea and cause significant astigmatism. In severe cases, ptotic eyelids may cover the visual axis resulting in amblyopia and irreversible visual impairment. Most cases of pediatric ptosis involved single eyelid drooping, said Dr. Li. In severe cases, the drooping of both eyelids can be a sign of more serious medical problems such as heart disease, gonadal atrophy myasthenia gravis or even tumors.

Pediatric ptosis is usually diagnosed in cases where more than 1mm or 1/5 of the area of a young patient's iris is covered by eyelid, with most cases occurring in a single eye. The condition is usually apparent in babies aged under one. Shoulder and neck pains caused by older children having to move their heads to see better is another tell-tale sign. Often, ptosis can affect a child's appearance, in turn his or her emotional development and self-confidence may be harmed by the teasing of classmates. In cases where a patient's ptosis has caused amblyopia, surgery is essential if visual damage is not to become irreversible.

Not all ptosis sufferers require immediate surgery

Pediatric ptosis is usually managed with a surgery called "frontalis muscle sling". The eye surgeon will use patients' own bodily tissue or special material to connect the forehead muscle

with levator muscle to enhance the eyelid lifting effect. The operation may leave a few tiny scars less than 1cm. As early operations are only essential in serious cases that threaten visual development, Dr. Li remarked such procedures should normally wait until children reach six or seven.

In closing, Dr. Li urged parents of affected kids not to rush them into the operating theater. “Parents should carefully observe their children’s behavior, take them for regular comprehensive eye tests and discussed with their doctor about the optimal time for surgery.”

Closing out the event, **Ms. Mary Lau, Executive Director, Orbis Hong Kong** said, “2018 is the seventh year Orbis has organized its successful Blindfold Lunch initiative. To date, around 52,000 primary students have taken part in the activity and has raised over HK\$3,250,000 to support visually impaired people around the world. We hereby extend our heartfelt thanks to AXA Foundation for its good corporate citizenship and continued support in spreading the eye care message.”

Ms. Andrea Wong, Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer, AXA Hong Kong said, “AXA Hong Kong is committed to empowering people to live better lives. Our AXA Foundation aims to promote health and education, and, through supporting different non-profits and community initiatives, to raise health awareness among the general public. We are very pleased to have partnered with Orbis to sponsor the Blindfold Lunch for seven consecutive years. It is encouraging that the number of participating schools has been on an upward trend since its launch. Through the unique blindfold experience, students deeply appreciate having healthy eyesight and the importance of protecting their eyes from an early age, while learning to care about visually impaired children worldwide. We truly hope to arouse even more public attention regarding visual impairment issues in the coming years.”

In addition to AXA Foundation, Orbis also wishes to express its appreciation to media sponsors Baby Kingdom, Baby mo and Yellow Bus. Its heartfelt thanks must also go to Orbis Volunteer Ophthalmologist Dr. Emmy Li, KING Enterprises, Rosaryhill School and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Faculty of Business for their tireless support of this event. To learn more about Orbis and to get involved, please visit www.orbis.org/hkblindfold.

Orbis Blindfold Lunch overview

To strengthen primary students’ awareness on eyes care, Orbis organises the “Orbis Blindfold Lunch” every year from March to May with the support of AXA Foundation. This year marks a more special occasion when Orbis cooperates with KING Enterprises for the first time. With a friendly and cute image, Tama-chan helps convey eye-care message through blindfold lunch and

seminars. Orbis Blindfold Lunch has been held for 7 consecutive years, and it provides a chance for students to enjoy their lunch with their eyes blindfolded so that they can experience the challenges blind people face and develop a better understanding on the blindness problem globally. Orbis hopes that student will cherish their vision through this event and learn to share the happiness with the needy.

About Orbis International

Orbis is a leading global non-governmental organization that has been a pioneer in the prevention and treatment of blindness for over 30 years. Orbis transforms lives by delivering the skills, resources and knowledge needed to deliver accessible quality eye care. Working in collaboration with local partners including hospitals, universities, government agencies and ministries of health, Orbis provides hands-on ophthalmology training, strengthens healthcare infrastructure and advocates for the prioritization of eye health on public health agendas. Orbis operates the world's only Flying Eye Hospital, a fully accredited ophthalmic teaching hospital on board an MD-10 aircraft. To learn more about Orbis and to get involved, please visit www.orbis.org.

About AXA Foundation

AXA Foundation is established by AXA Hong Kong. With the purpose "Empower People to Live a Better Life" in mind, it pledges to support various programs related to health and education in town. Through supporting different charities, AXA Foundation is committed to serve all walks of life in the community in order to contribute to the sustainability of the society.

AXA Foundation is dedicated to help the needy, so that everyone can be empowered to enjoy a stable and prosperous life.

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