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Exploring Novel Strategic Interventions for Pediatric Myopia Management (MM) in Early Childhood

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Renowned eye care professionals and CooperVision executives stimulated underlying causes, repercussions, and regimens to tackle myopia in young children at the 3rd edition of Asia Pacific Myopia Management Symposium (APMMS) at Taipei, Taiwan

Kathy Park, President, APAC, CooperVison *(Top left)*

Shila Gupta, Myopia Management General Manager, CooperVison *(Top right)*

Dr. Pi Jung Lin, President, Universal Eye Center *(bottom left)*

Dr. Li Lian Foo, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Singapore National Eye Center (SNEC) *(bottom right)*

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CooperVision, a global leader in myopia management, unveiled the 3rd edition of Asia Pacific Myopia Management Symposium (APMMS) at Marriott Taipei in Taiwan's ZhongShan District on 10 December 2023. The premier hybrid event brought together internationally renowned eye care professionals under one roof to address and explore the growing

prevalence of myopia in the Asia Pacific region and to explore new interventions for myopia management. APMMS was held in partnership with ‘Universal Eye Center’ and supported by ‘Taiwan Ophthalmological Society’.

A collaborative initiative by CooperVision, APMMS was conceived to encourage progressive dialogues on myopia, to recommend best practices in Myopia Management (MM). CooperVision is actively addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by myopia through strategic collaborations with industry leaders along with Universal Eye Center. Preventative healthcare is becoming more prominent in pursuit of reducing patient burden.

The mission driven by global eye care leaders stimulated underlying causes, repercussions and regimens to tackle myopia at the early stage**.** Biospectrum Asia grabbed an opportunity to explore further with renowned eye care professionals, Coopervision senior executives and KOL’s to gain deeper insights into Myopia Management (MM) trends and innovations across the region.

Kathy Park, President, APAC, CooperVison

APMMS is an important platform for addressing the rising epidemic condition of Myopia in Asia and CooperVison's role in championing efforts around Myopia Management(MM). When we look at the prevalence of myopia in Asia, the status is mind-boggling and has reached alarming levels today. Hence APMMS forum is an ideal platform to initiate a right dialogue among all the different stakeholders like the industry, the professionals, the clinicians, the associations and more in Asia for Asia Pacific myopia management.

Statistically, a substantial gap exists between where the scientific community has evolved and where the public knowledge currently stands. Even practitioners today believe myopia to be a refractive error and not a disease though it leads to visual impairment if untreated. Myopia management is a complex issue as there is so much evidence available. However, it hasn't trickled down enough to the general public.

In order to significantly impact the outcome of myopia management, we need to create more opportunities to exchange ideas and share knowledge more frequently. Although there is sufficient research data available on MM and tools are in existence, practitioners are still focusing on single vision correction lenses instead of adapting them to control and manage myopia. Hence APMS symposium aims to influence the willingness and the confidence of professionals to engage in further deeper dialogue together in this regard.

A large portion of our initial efforts are focused on working with professionals, particularly educators, and on raising awareness in some markets. The key to early intervention is advocacy, since the complications of vision impairment will increase as a child grows older if treatment is delayed. Due to the fact that parents often neglect early intervention in APAC, we are trying to make a real impact through our awareness campaigns.

Myopia prevalence is much higher in Northern Asia regions like China, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong. In rural areas, prevalence is lower because of a healthier lifestyle, but when outdoor activities become infrequent, the prevalence increases again. Likewise, there are many factors affecting the prevalence.

Nevertheless, as a country, China considers myopia as a more fundamental and serious issue, and conscious efforts are in practice to raise awareness among professionals and the public, which has increased the tide of the entire practice. In other countries, for example Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, and India, those practices aren't as pronounced. It has been reported that some guidelines have been released, but I think it's much more about consolidated efforts to raise awareness in the education sector. Partnerships and alliances across industries are equally important.

Shila Gupta, Myopia Management General Manager, CooperVison

Myopia is a very burdensome disease. WHO considers this as a major public health burden. Today, almost 30% of the population has myopia, including children and adults, and it will soon reach about 50%, i.e., almost 4 to 5 billion people globally. About 1 billion of these may have high myopia susceptibility and we've heard a lot about the risk.

Our efforts also include socioeconomic aspects. For instance, Taiwan may have put up $150 million dollars, but the economic impact globally is around $250 million. This is because kids have difficulty learning as children move from childhood into adulthood.

A key objective of Coopervison is to collaborate with organizations and institutions to bring people together in order to raise awareness, as well as to provide educational awareness so that participants from various countries can adopt and implement in their countries.

Coopervision's longest running clinical study for MiSight® 1 day soft contact lenses for myopia provides compelling clinical evidence. The compliance levels for MiSight® 1 day have been impressive during the seven year clinical trial. The seven-year study shows increased efficacy and is currently adopted by more than 250,000 kids worldwide in 30 countries.

We will continue to invest in research and development to ensure that we have the right product while we build awareness. As part of our multi stakeholder approach, we also partner with organizations such as the “Child Myopia Working Group” in Australia. By working together, we developed a standard of care for the community, organized community education, ensured that parents are included, and provided eye exams. Besides providing eye checkups and interventions, we also partner with other educational organizations like “Optometry Giving Sight” in the United States, which works with less developed markets.

In addition to partners and parents, we also work with NGOs and government agencies. We focus on R&D-based innovation. In Asia Pacific, we are planning to do more of these standards of care for parents and the community with professionals and with leading markets like Cloud Management Working Group (CMWG).

Various portfolios of myopia control options are available for managing myopia. However, we are focused on tailoring myopia management to each and every individual patient based on their age, gender, lifestyle, myopia progression, as well as their degree of myopia, since all of these treatments have their own advantages and disadvantages. The best way to customize the treatment is to use our portfolio of myopia control contact lenses, MiSight® 1 day and widest range of soft contact lenses, myopia control spectacle lenses, and Atropine eye drops of various concentrations. In clinical practice, we can also combine Optical with Pharmacology to do combination therapy, which means that even if you use one control treatment, you can switch to another.

Dr. Pi Jung Lin, President, Universal Eye Center

Myopia management has become increasingly important from the patient perspective as its prevalence has drastically increased in school children since 2008. Yet, on grounds there is a low level of awareness regarding myopia control. We therefore need a myopia management symposium such as APMMS, and we are honored to co-host the symposium with CooperVision in Taiwan. APMMS is an important platform to engage experts worldwide to connect with global eye care professionals for mutual learning as they share comprehensive treatment methods and modalities to prevent myopia patients from experiencing vision impairment.

Myopia is a concern regardless of whether it is in a high or low condition. Lack of awareness and coordination among practitioners is contributing to slow adoption of myopia management treatments by ophthalmologists. In order to effectively manage myopia, eye care professionals should advocate MM for patients as early as 5 years of age. Early detection of myopia is also crucial to controlling myopia progression. Even the medical schools still lack awareness about myopia management, and even a conference such as APMMS is only in its third edition as of the 21st century. Additionally, Ophthalmologists and optometrists practice differently based on prescription compliance and spectacle prescriptions. The policy makers and leaders in Taiwan and mainland China, however, have a great deal of influence over the industry.

Thus, Universal Eye Center groups expound on the significance of implementing patient centric myopia management practices. An enhanced attention is required on the partnership and collaboration across Taiwan and China and other APAC countries. We also recommend the eye clinic to extensively contact the school children. Myopia is a serious lifelong disease but can be intervened in the nascent phases. Thus, it requires immediate awareness creation by parents, schools, and policy makers about the need to control myopia at the earliest stage possible.

Dr. Li Lian Foo, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Singapore National Eye Center (SNEC)

(Specialized in refractive and Myopia surgeries)

APMMS is a brilliant and innovative platform that connects various stakeholders, including industry, eye doctors, ophthalmologists, and other healthcare professionals interested in this booming field of myopia. It would be great if everyone

from the region or even globally could come together once again to help in this landscape and set their gold standard in terms of myopia management so that we can continue to manage this epidemic that has developed into a pandemic.

Myopia prevalence is increasing worldwide, even in developing countries, and is becoming increasingly prevalent in developed countries as well. Approximately 80% of Singaporeans are myopic by 18 years of age. This is not just refractive error correction, there are so many other things that can be affected, such as quality of life, quality of vision, psychological level, and economic burden.

In Singapore, myopia is a burgeoning problem as well. As the leading provider of healthcare and eye care in Singapore, Singapore National Eye Center (SNEC) recognizes the need for formal training, which is why we have established a myopia fellowship that offers several sub-specialties such as pediatric optometry, retina, glaucoma cornea, etc. “Myopia Fellowship” is the first in the world to offer formal training, and I was the first to complete it at SNEC.

As a Clinical Assistant Professor for NTU Graduate Medical School I have noticed that the evolving challenges around myopia require various industry partners to play a critical role. APMMS conference is where we learn about the latest developments and updates, as well as what our peers and colleagues are doing in different markets to manage myopia, such as Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. Everyone has a critical role to play in managing myopia, from eye care professionals to industry partners to policy makers to parents and children themselves. We need to work together as Joint Forces to combat this issue.

Myopia is so rampant in Singapore that the number of medical tertiary care providers is much lower than the burden of the disease. Hence, in terms of managing stable myopia patients, we typically work in collaboration with community optometrists. In Singapore Atropine is an eye drop that can only be prescribed by Ophthalmologists for low myopia and for further treatment they will be referred to community Optometrists. Our goal is to have seamless flow of patient data regardless of whether the patient is seen in the community practice or in a tertiary center, so that there is inter-collaboration, as well as data sharing.