



## *Letter to the editor*

### **A need for an awareness campaign about nutrition and hygiene while conducting school eye health programs**

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Dear editor,

The article on the school eye survey in a rural population in UP (Gupta et al 2011) has brought out some hidden issues to be addressed during school eye health programs. The study showed the prevalence of Bitot's spot to be 0.9 % and that of blepharo-conjunctivitis and blepharitis as 15.45 %. This high prevalence seems to be due to the rural population's lack of awareness about nutrition and ocular hygiene.

In recent years (Turalci et al 2009), many school eye health camps are being carried out in developing countries like ours (Desai et al 1989). These will certainly help us get closer to the Right to sight : Vision 2020 goal. Nevertheless, what seems lacking in such eye camps is the awareness program about the importance of nutrition and hygiene for maintaining good ocular as well as general health. The rampant availability of junk foods like noodles, biscuits etc even in rural areas of our country plus the alluring advertisements about these junk foods and promos like free gift items while buying them have taken a form of a slow poison for many little children. These readymade and easy to cook foods are slowly replacing our traditional nutritious cereals like wheat, millet, maize and others. By raising the awareness of parents, teachers and senior students about the importance of these cheap but nutritious, local, home-made foods, we can contribute towards developing a whole generation of a physically and mentally fit population that also has very good eye health.

Therefore, it is important to incorporate an awareness program about nutrition and hygiene by posters, pamphlets etc in school eye health programs with the help of government and non-government organisations working in these fields. This would be a real boon to school eye health programs. So that our future generations can fully enjoy this beautiful world with their sharp eyes, sharp brains and healthy bodies.

#### **References**

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