



For Immediate Release

Date: October 8, 2015

Orbis uses World Sight Day 2015 to  
correct common misconceptions about presbyopia

To raise awareness of global blindness issues, Orbis has joined over 100 other international sight-saving organizations in supporting the World Health Organization (WHO) in designating the second Thursday of each October as "World Sight Day"(WSD). As a truly global sight-saving pioneer, Orbis has today urged Hongkongers to pay extra-close attention to eyecare issues at its 2015 WSD campaign awards ceremony at The ONE shopping mall in Tsim Sha Tsui.

As people enter middle age, their vision often begins to blur – a symptom of presbyopia, a condition associated with aging that few middle-aged people manage to escape. Remarkably, misconceptions regarding this most common of visual complaints remain rife. To this end, Orbis has used its WSD campaign for 2015 to invite Dr. Dexter Leung, President of the Hong Kong Ophthalmological Society, to raise awareness of both presbyopia and eye care issues as a whole.

In general, presbyopia's symptoms begin to develop at around age 40 when our eyes' lenses begin to lose elasticity and it becomes difficult for us to adjust our focus on close objects. Many people subsequently refuse to accept that their resultant blurring of vision might be an early warning sign of presbyopia. As myopia may offset some degrees of presbyopia, the belief that presbyopia and myopia are mutually exclusive remains quite common.

Recent years have seen many of us become increasingly addicted to our smart phones. Overuse of such electronic devices not only accelerates presbyopia's development, but also makes its symptoms more apparent. "While frequent heavy use of smart phones may not directly cause presbyopia, it will intensify its symptoms or even cause such symptoms to reveal themselves earlier. Youngsters are also addicted to smart phones but tend not to develop symptoms of presbyopia because their eyes are still too young to start degenerating. Once one starts developing the symptoms of presbyopia, it will soon become difficult to view one's phone. Our growing reliance on mobile technologies mean that such devices are now having a far bigger impact on our lives," Dr. Leung explained.



For this its 12<sup>th</sup> WSD campaign, Orbis has posed the question “Can you afford to save someone’s eyesight?” as its theme. The ultimate aim is to remind Hongkongers just how precious their vision is and also encourage them to make a donation to subsidize Orbis’s worldwide sight-saving mission. Since the campaign’s launch in June, some 310 companies and schools, together with 2,830 individuals, have raised over HK\$4.8 million for Orbis. “I am delighted to learn that WSD 2015 continues to consolidate donations to Orbis across society as a whole. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the many participating organizations and individuals who have loaned their support. Your compassion is enabling our sight saving volunteers to conduct still more eye surgeries that are benefitting still more needy people. In most Third World countries, access to quality eye care remains a luxury that only the very rich can afford. As a result, the disadvantaged are left to go blind. In continuing to support Orbis’ sight-saving initiatives, you will enable the launching of long-term sight-saving programs where the need is greatest,” said Mary Lau, Development Director of Orbis China and Hong Kong.

**Support sight-saving surgery by donating now!**

Today is your final chance to obtain a free Orbis pin by making a donation at your nearest MTR station’s Circle K store. For details of WSD 2015, please visit [www.orbis.org/hkwsd](http://www.orbis.org/hkwsd)

**World Sight Day 2015 Roll of Honor**

**Top Five Fundraising Organizations**

Champion: Collyer Logistics International Ltd

1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up: ULA Umbrella

2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up: Sunny Creations Limited

3<sup>rd</sup> Runner-up: BAS (H.K.) Ltd

4<sup>th</sup> Runner-up: Inland Revenue Department Sports Association

**Top Five Organizations with the Most Participants**

Champion: Inland Revenue Department Sports Association

1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up: Optical 88 Ltd.

2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up: Buildings Department

3<sup>rd</sup> Runner-up: Canon Hongkong Company Limited

4<sup>th</sup> Runner-up: Hong Kong Wing On Travel Service Limited

## Appendix

### **Common misconceptions about presbyopia**

#### *Are myopia and presbyopia mutually exclusive?*

People with myopia can also develop presbyopia. From a purely optical perspective, short-sightedness may offset some degrees of presbyopia and as a result myopia sufferers may not develop presbyopia symptoms until later.

#### *Is presbyopia a form of hyperopia?*

From a purely optical perspective, presbyopia *is* a form of hyperopia, with different roots of causes. Hyperopia develops when our eyeballs are too short and what is being seen cannot be focused on the retina. Presbyopia, on the other hand, is caused by the loss of elasticity of the lens.

#### *Can lasik surgery cure presbyopia?*

Mono Vision is now a common means of curing presbyopia, which uses lasik surgery to adjust the radius of each cornea. One eye will then take care of seeing close objects, while the other will be responsible for viewing items some distance away.

#### *Can frequent use of smart phones cause presbyopia?*

While holding smart phone screens close to the eyes generally does not cause presbyopia directly, it can result in its symptoms developing sooner or with greater intensity. Once you start developing the symptoms of presbyopia, you will find it hard to view your phone's screen, and the more often you use your phone, the worse the problem is likely to become.

#### *Are there any ways to delay the onset of presbyopia?*

Yes, reduce your use of electronic devices and try to relax your eye muscles by gazing at far-away objects more often. If possible, close and rest your eyes for three minutes every hour.

#### *Is there any upper limit to presbyopia's impact?*

In general, sufferers develop presbyopia of 275 to 300 degrees. In especially severe cases, this can rise to 400 degrees. People who develop both presbyopia and hyperopia will generally need prescription glasses of over 400 degrees.