

**FROM DOCTORS TO EVENT MANAGERS:
MALAYSIA'S WORLD SIGHT DAY 2020**



This year, on the 8th of October 2020, Malaysia celebrated World Sight Day which was hosted by Sarawak Eye Services in Kuching. The coronavirus pandemic-induced lockdown did not dampen the spirit of the ophthalmologists to continue to fight against preventable blindness.

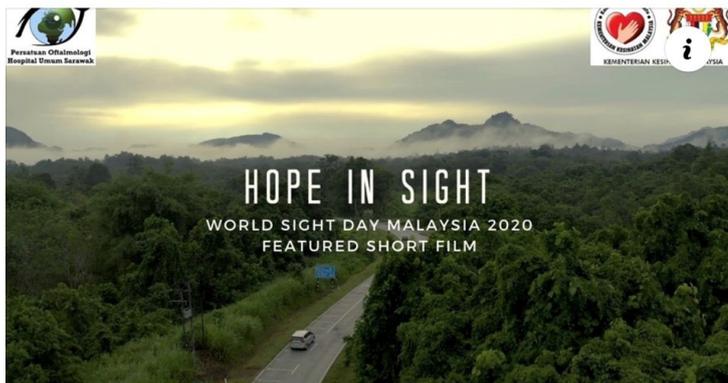
For the first time in history, Malaysia's World Sight Day 2020 was celebrated virtually, given the requisite measures of social-distancing in the 'new normal'. The entire ophthalmology fraternity, from both East and West Malaysia, 'met' via Zoom teleconferencing and celebrated World Sight Day together despite being separated by the vast South China Sea.

World Sight Day (WSD) is an annual awareness event that is celebrated every second Thursday of October. It is coordinated by IAPB (International Agency of Prevention of Blindness) to raise public awareness on blindness and vision impairment as a major international public health issue. It provides a platform to encourage governments, corporations, institutions, hospitals, societies, and individuals to actively support universal access to eye health.



From Slit Lamps to Stage Lights.

The event was officiated by the Director of Sarawak State Health Department, Dr. Chin Zin Hing. He was accompanied via Zoom teleconferencing by the National Head of Ophthalmology Services, Dr. Nor Fariza Ngah, and the Western Pacific Regional Coordinator of IAPB, Mr. Drew Keys. Attending in person were the Sarawak State Ophthalmologist, Dr. Chieng Lee Ling as well as the Director of Hospital Umum Sarawak, Dr. Ngian Hie Ung.



YOUTUBE.COM
 WORLD SIGHT DAY MALAYSIA 2020 - Featured Short Film "HOPE IN SIGHT"

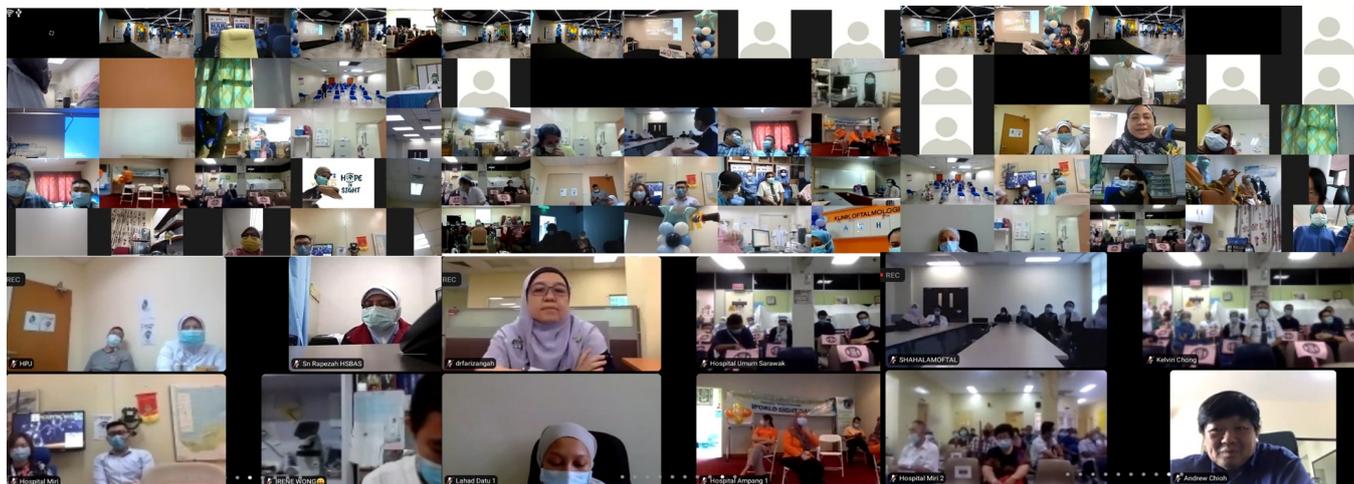
Malaysia’s World Sight Day 2020 started with the presentation of a 40-minute video compilation from all the 42 eye departments in Malaysia. From the effortless transitions between the scenes, the superb videographic editing skill, and the spell-binding images of the flying drones; one cannot help but be amazed by the budding creative talents, overwhelmingly displayed by these young eye doctors.

A featured short film was premiered on that day to highlight the plight and socioeconomic impact of the blind community. With the theme of Hope in Sight this year, this touching 5-minute film showcased the life of a young diabetic patient and how bilateral mature cataracts had affected her life, work and family. Inspired by a real patient’s story, this film highlighted the fact that preventable blindness, such as cataracts, can be easily treated by a simple cataract surgery.

The film was shot in Bahasa Iban with English subtitles to exude a ‘wow’ factor and an authentic Sarawakian experience. To further infuse the occasion with an authentic Sarawakian ‘feel’, the opening ceremony was culminated with a traditional cultural dance performed by the local Sarawakian dance troupe.

Besides that, six educational videos had been specially-curated by the Sarawak Eye Services to specifically raise awareness and educate the Malaysian public regarding preventable blindness. These educational videos were focused on refractive error, cataract, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy (and diabetic macular edema), and pathologic myopia to address the commonest causes of preventable blindness in Malaysia. The videos were animated, short (each lasting about 3-minutes) videos and presented in layman terms. Although, they are currently available in English and Bahasa Malaysia languages, we are working on producing them in other languages as well. These videos have been published to the YouTube platform through the Sarawak Eye Society channel.

One of the highlights of the event was a 10KM month-long virtual charity run, aptly named “You and Eye, together in the new norm” which was organized from 31st August to 30th September 2020 to celebrate World Sight Day. Despite being confined to Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), this virtual run received an exceptionally heart-warming support from more than 500 participants, not only from the ophthalmology fraternity but also from the public.





From Doctors to Event Managers.

As the organising chairperson of Malaysia's World Sight Day 2020, I had only ONE plan - DO. NOT. FAIL.

Apart from the routine clinical works, there are many 'unseen' behind-the-scenes work that needed to be accomplished. Undeniably, there were many late nights of typing letters; revising proposals; making slide presentations; writing, rewriting and revising the paperwork; editing videos; recordings; preparing budgets; reformulating the virtual concepts due to unforeseen circumstances; rehearsals; meetings after meetings; gentle reminders and nudges; and loads of time-consuming deadlines that were impossible to be executed alone. I shall be forever indebted to all the various committees and sub-committees for their sacrifices and endeavours for the past year in making Malaysia's World Sight Day 2020 such a resounding success. Most of all, I wish to express my appreciation to our 'Big Boss' (aka our State Ophthalmologist as we fondly call him) for benchmarking the whole process, giving us a chance to lead, and allowing us to realize our creative ideations.

Links:

Interview with Dr. Wendy See by The Health magazine: <https://view.joomag.com/the-health-october-2020/0763239001602121461>

A Short Film (by Benjamin Ho) entitled "Hope in Sight": https://www.youtube.com/embed/lgmyvsK_CmM

World Sight Day 2020: A Video Compilation of Our Ophthal-Family: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/DeIK-qlxGNo>

Happy World Sight Day to all my comrades!

Let's all pledge to fight preventable blindness together!

Stay safe and till we meet again soon!!



**From Sarawak with love,
DR WENDY SEE**

Ophthalmologist
Hospital Umum Sarawak