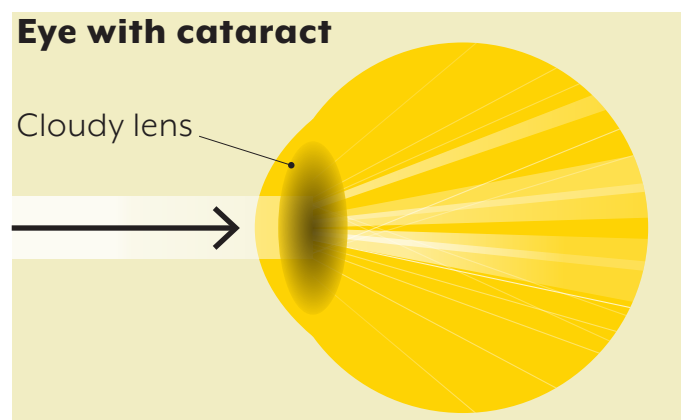
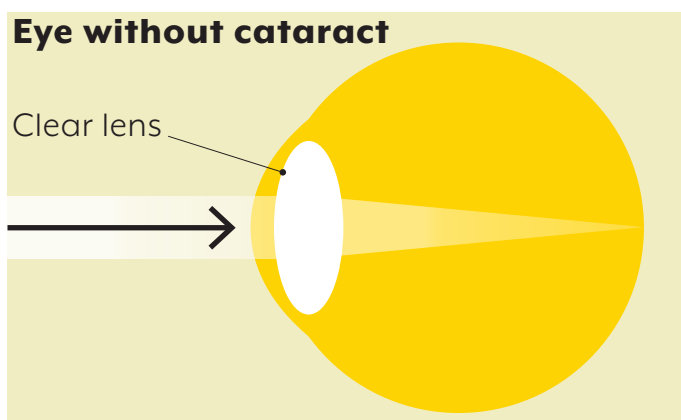


Access to cataract surgery

What is cataract?

Cataract is the **clouding of the lens** of the eye that causes progressively blurred vision. It can affect both children and adults.



Cataract is the **leading cause of blindness worldwide**, affecting over 94 million people.

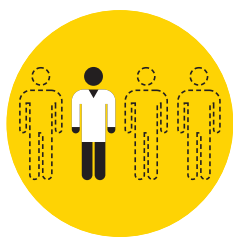
While the **risk of cataracts increases with age**, other factors can speed up their development, including excessive exposure to ultraviolet light, trauma, tobacco use and certain medical conditions such as diabetes.

Cataract surgery restores sight and is one of the most cost-effective of all health care interventions.

To address the global burden, countries adopted a **target of increasing access to cataract surgery by 30% by 2030**, as part of worldwide efforts to reduce preventable blindness.

Barriers to cataract care

Efforts to close the cataract treatment gap face significant obstacles such as:



shortage and unequal distribution of skilled personnel to screen, diagnose, and perform surgery;

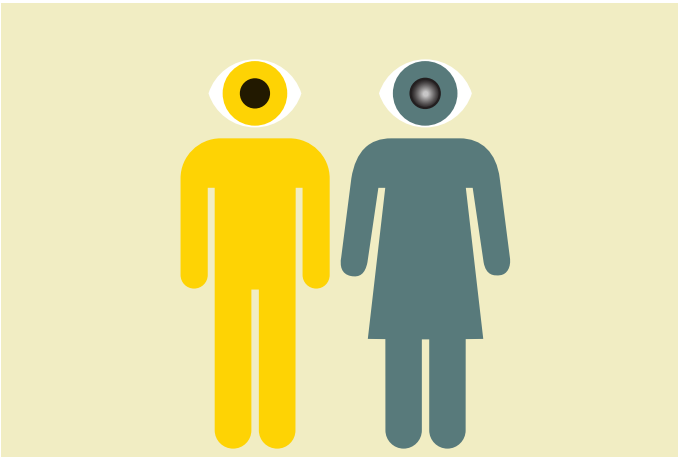


high out-of-pocket costs for surgery and long wait times; and

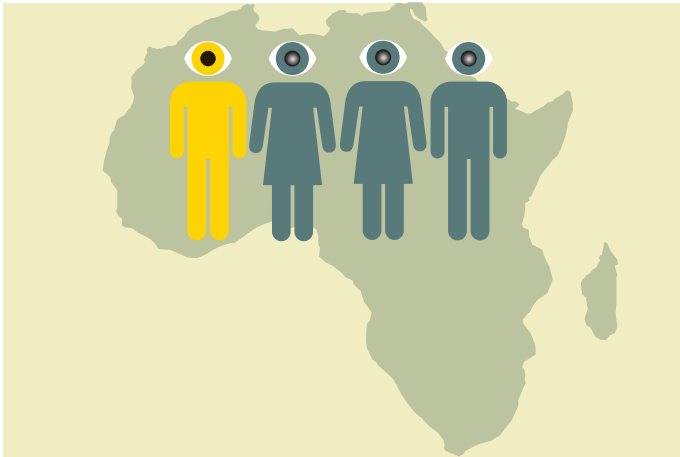


lack of awareness and limited demand for cataract surgery, even where treatment is available.

Millions living in the dark

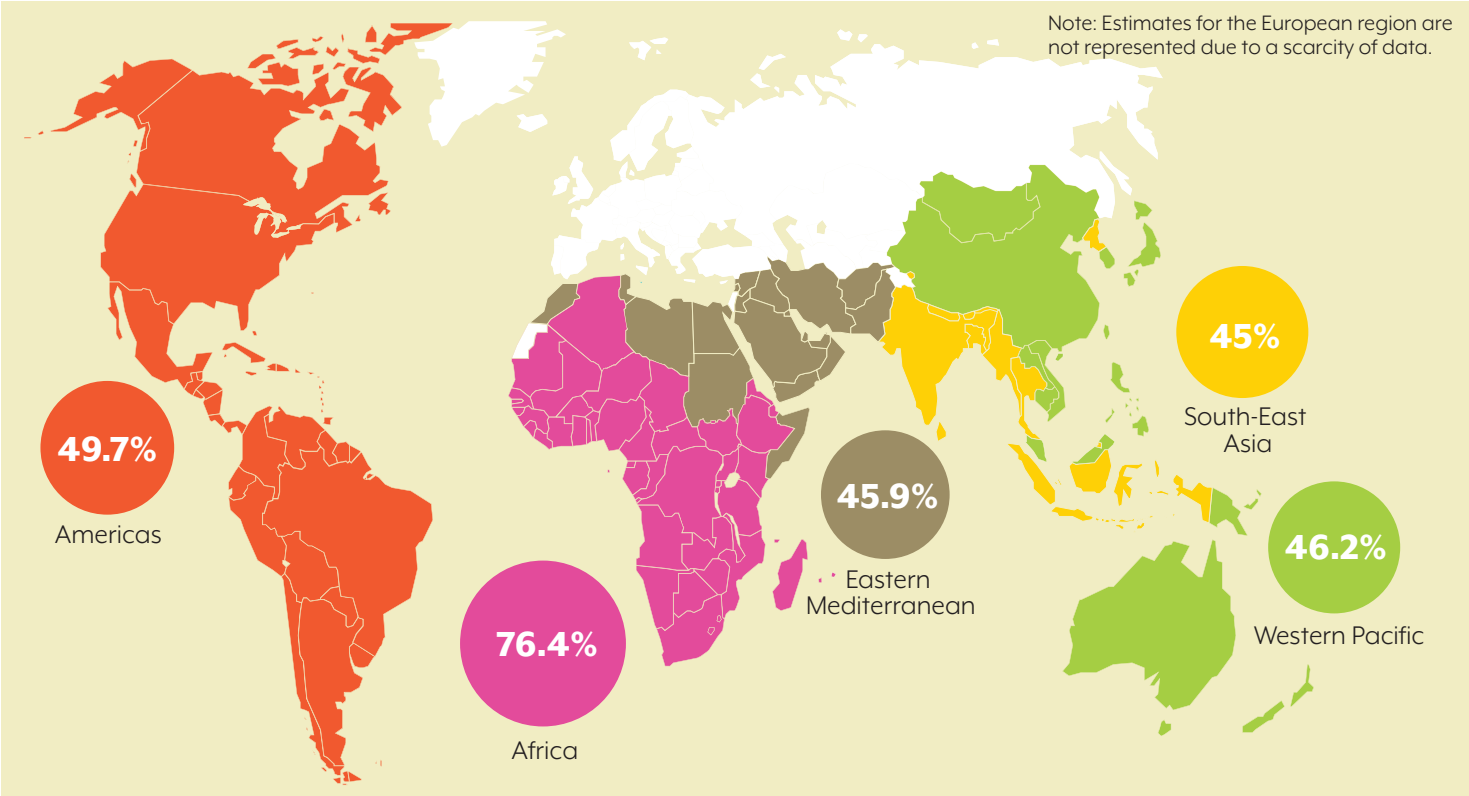


Globally, **1 in 2** people who need cataract surgery can't access it.

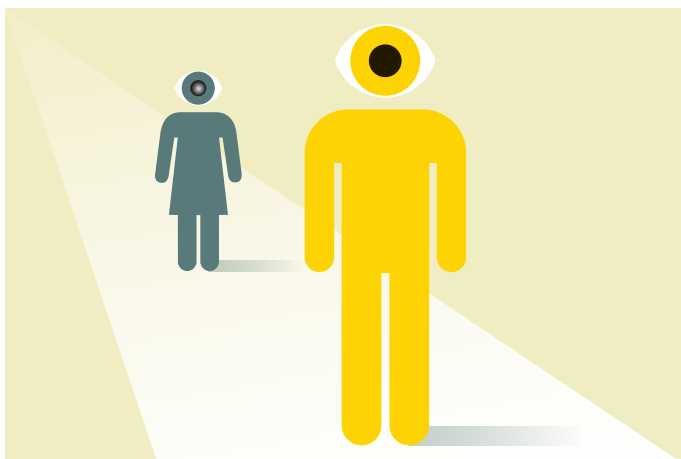


In the **African region**, this number increases to **3** in every **4** people.

Cataract surgery unmet need by WHO region

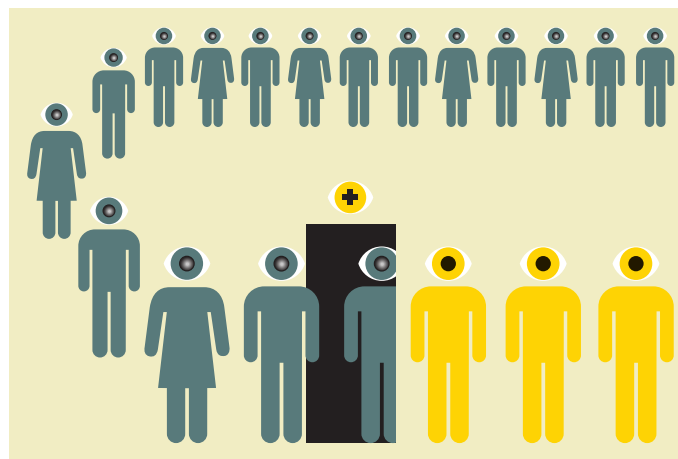


Cataract surgery access is not equal



Women are less likely than men to have cataract surgery, leaving them disproportionately affected by vision loss. Addressing these gender disparities is critical to ensure equitable eye care for all.

Access is increasing



Despite an increase in the number of people with **cataract**, **cataract surgery access has expanded by about 15%** over the last 2 decades.

Urgent need to accelerate progress



The current pace of progress in cataract care is only one-third of what is needed to meet the global 2030 target.

Millions remain needlessly blind from untreated cataracts. By acting now and scaling up access, we can restore sight, transform lives, and achieve equity in eye care.

It's time for action. While significant strides have been made, it is critical to build on this momentum to end preventable blindness caused by untreated cataracts.