

ICOPE

INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Vision



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Learning objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Explain the care pathways for managing vision impairment in older people
- Describe how to assess the vision and common eye conditions of older people
- List the interventions to manage vision impairment in older people, both in primary care and in the community



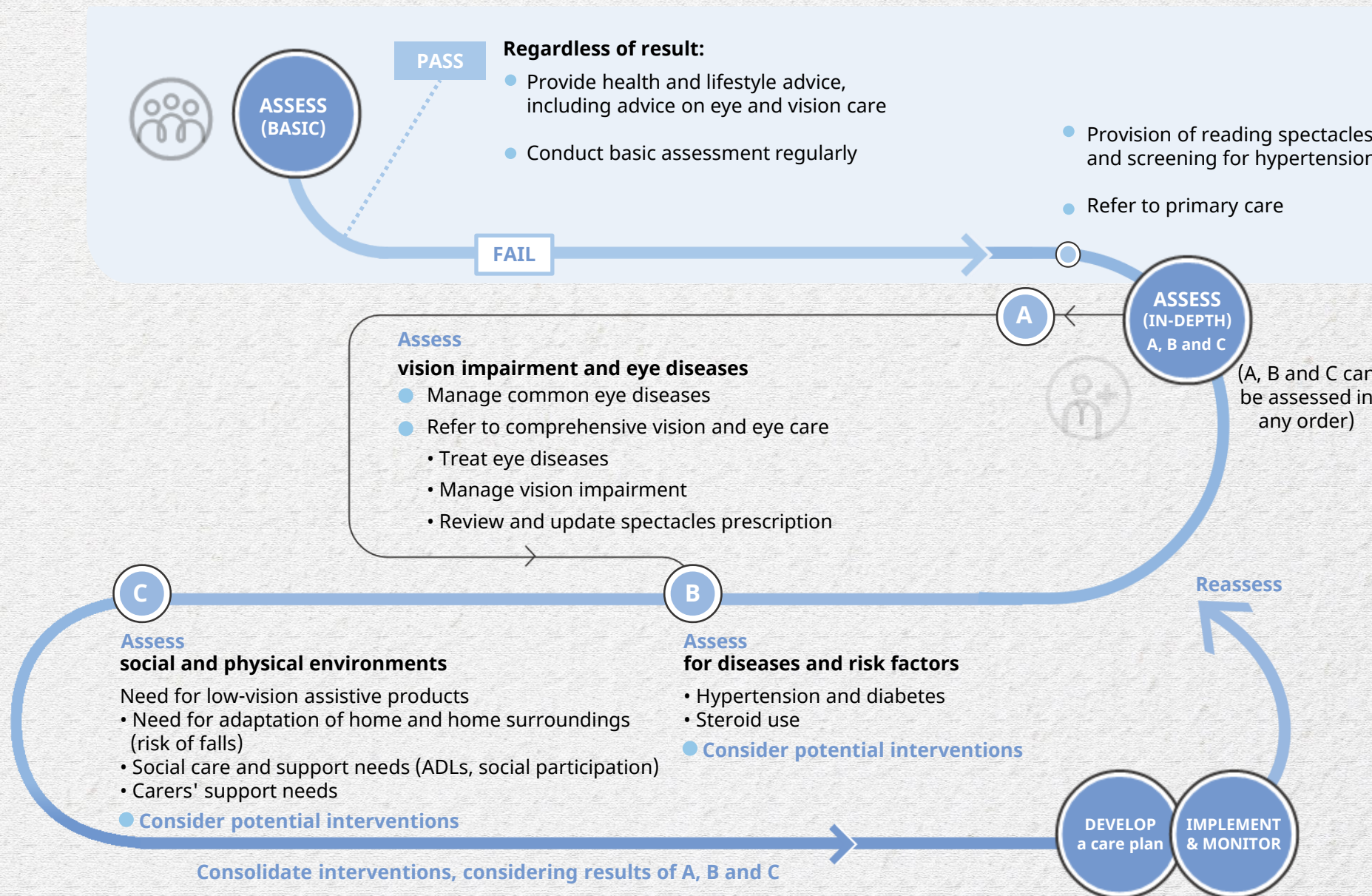


Importance of vision

- Vision is essential for mobility and for safely interacting with peers and the environment.
- Common age-related causes of vision impairment include cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration.
- Vision impairment can lead to challenges in maintaining social relationships, accessing information, moving safely and performing manual tasks.
- These challenges may contribute to anxiety and depression.



Care pathway to manage vision impairment





Assessment of vision

Health workers can **perform eye and vision examinations** in primary care settings.

Visual acuity: Ability to clearly identify objects or letters at a given distance.

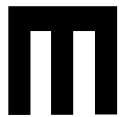
- Measured using a tumbling E chart
- Essential for detecting refractive errors

Testing conditions:

- Well-lit space with adequate distance (3 m for distance vision; 40 cm for near vision)
- If the person wears spectacles, test with spectacles on.

Common eye conditions:

- Red eye, abnormal lashes, conjunctivitis, dry eye disease, eyelid inflammation
- Examine the external eye, eyelids and eyelashes using a torch





Health and lifestyle advice and community-based care

For all older people

- Addressing common misconceptions
- Managing risk factors for vision impairment
- Attending regular eye check-ups
- Taking regular breaks from near work activities
- Limiting exposure to ultraviolet light by wearing sunglasses and hats
- Washing hands regularly
- Smoking cessation, as smoking increases the risk of eye diseases

For older people with (potential) vision impairment

- Optimization of the home and home surroundings to prevent falls
- Advice on how and when to use spectacles

Community-based care for visual impairment

Provision of reading spectacles

	Power
40–50 years:	+1.00 DS to +2.00 DS
>50 years:	+2.00 DS to +3.00 DS

Screening for hypertension





Management of vision impairment

Management of common eye diseases

- Provide treatment and/or first aid care
- Referral to specialist care

Management of refractive errors

- Comprehensive vision and eye care
- Corrective measures (e.g., spectacles, contact lenses)
- Referral to refractive surgery

Irreversible vision impairment and blindness

- Provision of assistive products
- Referral to rehabilitation services

When specialized knowledge is needed

- Sudden or rapidly progressing vision impairment
- Provision of spectacles for correcting distance vision impairment
- Management of retinal diseases associated with hypertension, diabetes, or other eye conditions
- Issues regarding the external eye





Interventions for diseases and risk factors



Hypertension

- Management of cardiovascular risk factors



Diabetes

- Annual retinal check



Steroid use

- Regular review of steroid prescription
- Regular eye and vision examination



Interventions for social and physical environment



Need for adaptation of the home and home surroundings

- Optimize physical environments to reduce the risk of falls.
- Advise on the use of household objects with larger, more legible fonts.



Need for assistive products

Provide low-vision assistive products (optical and non-optical).



Social care and support needs

- Support daily living tasks and opportunities for social participation.
- Provide psychosocial support.



Carer's support needs

- Provide advice and training, including adaptation of communication.

Summary



- A simple eye chart enables community health workers to conduct a basic assessment for vision impairment.
- Most vision impairment and blindness can be prevented through early detection and timely management of eye diseases.
- Spectacles often correct loss of near or distance vision.
- Assistive products such as magnifiers and white canes support those whose vision impairment cannot be corrected with spectacles.

Summary



- Environmental modifications, including better lighting, improve functional ability and help prevent falls in older people with vision impairment.
- Community stakeholders can support older people with vision impairment by mapping and auditing local environments and establishing peer support groups.

References

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