

Asia Optometric Congress Launches Low Vision Accreditation Program

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Manila, Philippines - The bustling atmosphere of the Helix Auditorium at Manila Central University set the stage for a groundbreaking event as the prestigious Asia Optometric Congress (AOC) Academy of Low Vision hosted the inaugural Low Vision Accreditation Program Level 1 on March 20-21, 2024. This occasion drew 50 Filipino optometrists united in their commitment to advancing standards in low vision care throughout the region. The AOC served as a pivotal platform, fostering knowledge exchange and innovation aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals with low vision.

Keynote speakers included Prof. Datuk Dr. Rokiah Omar, a renowned figure in optometric education from Malaysia, who shared insights into advanced low vision rehabilitation techniques. Hon. Dr. Christine S. Rodriguez, a staunch advocate for low vision rehabilitation and healthcare accessibility, emphasized the AOC's pivotal role in enhancing vision care standards.

The program was also graced by Mr. Mike Barredo, President of PHILSPADA (Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled), highlighting the importance of inclusivity and specialized care for individuals with visual impairments.

The participants engaged in a series of informative lectures and interactive workshops, focusing on the latest diagnostic tools and practical strategies for managing low vision cases effectively. The program fostered collaboration and knowledge exchange among attendees, reinforcing the commitment to providing comprehensive and personalized care for patients with visual challenges.

Reflecting on the success of the program, organizers expressed optimism about its potential to drive advancements in low vision care throughout Asia. Participants left the event inspired and equipped with new skills and insights to enhance their practices and positively impact the lives of low vision patients.

Forty-four (44) out of fifty (50) participants successfully passed the Level 1 AOC Low Vision Certification exam on May 17, 2024, qualifying them to advance to Level 2. Scheduled for July and August 2024, the Level 2 course will introduce a sports vision track aimed at certifying optometrists proficient in visual classification for para-athletes. This initiative by the AOC Academy of Low Vision aims to promote sports participation among individuals with visual impairments. Additionally, plans are underway to extend the certification course to other member countries within the region.