2020 International Vision Health Scorecard
Questions and Answers

What is the International Vision Health Scorecard?

The 2020 International Vision Health Scorecard seeks to elevate attention to vision health among policymakers, governments and health systems. It identifies best practices and areas of opportunity with specific calls to action to spur meaningful policy progress. The Scorecard evaluates 15 countries, and it will serve as a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

The goal of this Scorecard is to complement existing global health efforts such as the World Health Organization (WHO) World report on vision by adding to the conversation through the lens of aging, in alignment with the goals of the Decade of Healthy Aging.

Why has the Global Coalition on Aging chosen to prioritize the topic of vision health?

GCOA recognizes that aging is a major risk for visual impairment, but vision loss is often dismissed as a normal consequence of growing older. With over 2 billion people projected to be over 60 by 2050, this type of ageism can no longer be an excuse for policy inaction. Since 90 percent of vision loss is avoidable, taking action on vision health is essential if we are to ensure healthy aging, functional ability and independence as we age. By linking vision to the mega-trend of aging, we aim for the Scorecard to become a catalyst for prioritizing vision and eye health on national and international policy agendas.

Which countries are evaluated in the Scorecard? How were they selected?

GCOA's 2020 International Vision Health Scorecard evaluates Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

GCOA developed the country set with several priorities in mind. First, we looked at the G20 to ensure that we were evaluating countries with international influence. We then

looked to countries outside of the G20 that yield influence in their regions or on their continents. We then evaluated the country set to ensure the inclusion of high-, middle-, and low-income countries. This approach ensures diversity among the government and health systems reviewed as well as provides insights and examples from countries that can serve as global models.

How are countries scored? What was the methodology?

The Scorecard evaluates countries' performance across six categories: national commitment and investment, research and innovation, health system preparedness, access, prevention, and societal support.

The evaluation is based on key metrics developed from data and research of respected global organizations including the OECD, WHO, WEF, IAPB, WIPO, and others. We also reference publicly available governmental reports and research publications. The evaluation was further supplemented and validated by insights from more than 40 global key opinion leaders and subject matter experts including advocates, researchers, economists, clinicians, business leaders, and people living with vision loss and blindness. This input was gained through one-on-one interviews and surveys.

Which countries are doing best and why?

Rated on a 10-point scale, the top three performing countries are the United Kingdom (8.2), Australia (8.1), and the United States (7.6). High-scoring countries tend to have strong performance across all categories and have set international best practices for work that addresses the challenges of vision health and the interconnected goal of healthy aging.

Top-performing countries tend to be high-income, with national plans and strategies to address vision health. These factors aid in raising awareness, strengthening infrastructure, improving goal setting, and spurring R&D and innovation.

In some instances, countries may have a strong policy, but country-level input indicates a lack of implementation. Further, developed countries with aging populations tended to show more advanced policy action. It should be noted that countries were ranked based on evidence of their commitment to vision health across categories. A full reporting of the data and scoring framework can be found in the appendix of the report.

What are the report's key findings? What are the opportunities for action?

Overall, the report finds the need for policymakers and governments to advance their focus and attention on vision health priorities, which often are neglected and underfunded. The report calls for increased awareness of eye diseases and conditions as well as the economic and social cost of vision loss, which is a key motivator of action on vision health.

The Scorecard highlights examples of leading practices, which can serve as models for others in the global community. For instance, the Scorecard highlights Australia's two national plans for vision health and the successes of the National Eye Institute in the United States for groundbreaking vision research.

Other key findings include:

- Policymakers' focus on vision health is inadequate, and sufficient funding is not provided.
- Few high-income countries have established national plans to prioritize vision health, national level bodies, or eye health system audits.
- Data on vision health is inconsistent, inhibiting successful population-based solutions.
- Government support for vision health research has not kept pace with economic growth, leaving the private sector, advocates, and non-profits to drive research.
- COVID-19 has had unforeseen impacts on vision health, highlighting the need for innovative solutions to detection, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Many countries expect a shortage of ophthalmologists, which will be exacerbated by aging populations and a lack of coordination among providers.
- Vision health knowledge and skills are lacking outside of ophthalmology and optometry.
- Patient-centered care drives a responsive and coordinated approach to prevention and treatment.
- Despite outreach, underserved communities' needs remain largely unmet.
- Coverage for eye health is inconsistent, leading to gaps in access and frequently unaffordable costs.
- Vision health is also not embedded across health systems, leading to gaps in care.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL COALITION ON AGING

The Global Coalition on Aging aims to reshape how global leaders approach and prepare for the 21st century's profound shift in population aging. GCOA uniquely brings together global corporations across industry sectors with common strategic interests in aging populations, a comprehensive and systemic understanding of aging, and an optimistic view of its impact. Through research, public policy analysis, advocacy, and strategic communications, GCOA is advancing innovative solutions and working to ensure global aging is a path to health, productivity and economic growth. For more information, visit www.globalcoalitiononaging.com.