

Canadian Orthoptist in Pakistan - Lahore

I was fortunate to participate as an orthoptic instructor/ IOA volunteer in a Basic Science Course that took place at the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences, King Edward Medical University, Mayo Hospital in Lahore Pakistan from December 7 to December 12, 2009. Lahore is the capitol of the Punjab province of Pakistan and the second largest city of Pakistan after Karachi. Lahore's population is 7 million people. Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. Rich in Mughal history Lahore is often described as the cultural capitol of Pakistan with beautiful Mughal structures serving as popular tourists spots such as the Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens. Punjabi is the native language of the province and Urdu is the National language of the country.

The College of Ophthalmology & Allied Vision Sciences (COAVS), King Edward Medical University, Mayo Hospital, sponsored this Basic Science course and Vision4Children, an international charitable group, aimed at eliminating global childhood blindness. Pediatric Ophthalmologist, Dr Arvind Chandna, from the Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool, England coordinated the visit. He provided a series of lectures and skills transfers along with Dr. Humza Tahir, a post doc in optometry from Berkeley, California, myself and Ass. Prof. Dr. Shakil Ahmed, a very skilled local pediatric ophthalmologist. Local optometrists and orthoptists from the Mayo Hospital ably assisted us in our instruction of our 144 optometry, bio medical and orthoptic students. I had very two enthusiastic orthoptists, Hamza A. Sheikh and Ayesha Sarfraz, to assist/mentor my instruction. A great deal of work is being done at the King Edward Medical University to develop a superior educational experience for their students. Their students were enthusiastic about learning new skills and true pleasure to teach. Efforts are being made to create a Pakistan Orthoptic Association. A current disruption in traveling around the country has made national meetings difficult to carry out at this time.

Attached are pictures of the Badshahi Mosque, the second largest in Pakistan and a famous landmark and a major tourist attraction epitomizing the beauty, passion and grandeur of the Mughal era. To appreciate its large size, the four minarets of the Badshahi Mosque are taller than those of the Taj Mahal and the main platform of the Taj could fit into the Badshahi's courtyard.

Vision4children hopes to send orthoptist and optometrist teams to Lahore 4 times per year in the future. If you are interested in becoming an IOA volunteer I would suggest you go the website for the International Orthoptic Association and download their IOA volunteer forms found at <http://www.internationalorthoptics.org/>

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