

# PRIMARY EYE CARE TRAINING NEED ASSESSMENT AMONG GENERAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN ETHIOPIA



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## CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

Ethiopia is confronted with a significant burden of preventable vision loss and a shortage of trained eye-care professionals. Enhancing primary eye care (pec) through the primary health system has the potential to increase access to essential eye services and strengthen referral pathways. To address these challenges, a training needs assessment was carried out to pinpoint actionable gaps in pec knowledge and skills among general health workers, which will help inform a national training initiative.

## METHOD/INTERVENTION

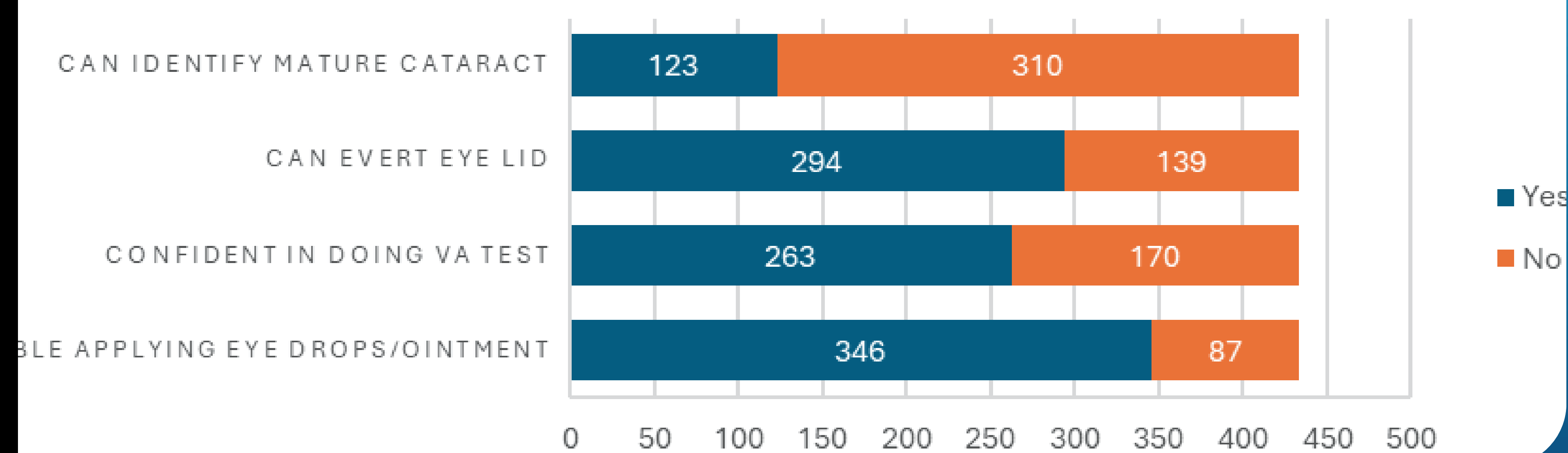
A cross-sectional mixed methods needs assessment was conducted among general health professionals involved in Primary Health Care delivery, with 433 respondents participating. Data were collected from primary health care facilities located in five randomly selected regions of Ethiopia: Oromia, Sidama, South Ethiopia, Central Ethiopia, and the Addis Ababa city administration. The assessment focused on training exposure, self-reported confidence and comfort with PEC tasks, as well as perceived barriers to PEC delivery. Descriptive statistics were used for survey items, while qualitative findings were summarized through thematic analysis.

## RESULTS

The assessment surveyed 433 general health professionals—51.5% female and 48.5% male—including nurses (47.8%), health officers (28.4%), midwives (13.9%), and general practitioners (9.9%). Most held a bachelor's degree (73.4%), while 10.2% had a master. Among the respondents only 15% had received some training (mainly in-service) on eye health topics.



### BASIC EYE CARE SKILLS AMONG GENERAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



Barriers to effective PEC included a lack of formal training (34.6%), limited availability of PEC materials (21.3%), and frequent medication stock-outs (76.7%). Interest in further PEC skills was high, with 98.4% wanting more knowledge and 97.0% seeking formal training.

## CONCLUSION

This training needs assessment identified critical gaps in PEC training exposure, clinical confidence for key skills, and system readiness (notably commodity availability). Findings support prioritizing scalable PEC training and implementation support within Ethiopia's primary health system, aligned with integrated people-centered eye care

## KEY INSIGHTS:

- Strengthening PEC reduces preventable blindness, eases health burdens, and cuts system costs. Integrating PEC aligns with WHO's people-centred eye care and lowers household poverty by reducing expenses and disability. Better vision boosts educational outcomes for women and children and promotes inclusive development. Overall, strong PEC helps eliminate avoidable sight loss and supports sustainable goals in health, education, gender, and economic growth.

## DISCLOSURE

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