



**3 de Dezembro**

**08h30 | 10h00 – Sala 3**

**Glaucoma, Geral | Glaucoma, General**

Moderadores | Chairs: Paula Tenedório (HPH), Mariana Cardoso (HVFX), Isabel Sampaio (CHUPorto)

## **CO 115**

### **HUMANITARIAN PROJECT IN AFRICA**

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**Introduction and Objectives:** Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr is a Portuguese non-profit organization. IMVF launched, in 1988, the Health for All Programme. Since 2009 the organisation has tackled specialized health care services through Portuguese specialists' missions to the field. In this context, the iSee® project was launched and introduced Teleye®, the Telemedicine system adapted to Ophthalmology. Sao Tome and Principe has approximately 200.000 inhabitants. Facing the lack of local specialists, Sao Tome and Principe only manages to have ophthalmological care through quarterly missions to the field carried out by Portuguese specialists, thus acting as tools to improve national health indicators.

**Materials and Methods:** This is a hospital-based retrospective study of all consecutive ophthalmological interventions over a thirteen-year period.

**Results and Discussion:** For the last thirteen years an ophthalmological team has carried out short-term medical missions; these missions are planned and structured, not shuttle-type missions. Through out this time we performed 37 missions, 20.216 medical consults and 2992 surgeries. Furthermore, we have provided 91 educational courses for health professionals as well as the general public, 21 skill transfers sessions and continued specialized education to the 6 ophthalmological nurses, technicians and one recent ophthalmologist that reside in the island. Our main target disease areas were: cataract, glaucoma, childhood blindness, trauma prevention and diabetic retinopathy. The program was also successful in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the sanitary evacuation process and in helping to decrease their number in 30%. From scratch it's only the first ten years, the prevalence of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in Sao Tome dropped 48,4%, substantially exceeding the 25% target set by the UN Global Action Plan to be attained by 2019. The telemedicine system, particularly the Teleye® platform, allows regular, timely and improved diagnoses, case orientation and follow up as well as the programming of surgical interventions to be performed during the field missions. Moreover, by allowing a timely and accurate clinical assessment and the subsequent referral for medical evacuation and treatment in Portugal, the iSee® tool has proven sight saving for 89 patients so far. The efficiency and efficacy of the "iSee®" approach are continuously increasing: while assuring an equitable access to ophthalmological healthcare, this tool allows a cost saving of around 97% when compared to the costs of equivalent treatment in case of medical evacuation to Portugal.

**Conclusion:** By late 2022 the undertaken work succeeded to reduce the prevalence of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in STP by 44%. We have seek to continuously address the main causes of avoidable blindness, in order to have the greatest possible impact on preventable vision loss and to give all Saint Tomeans, particularly the needlessly blind, the right to sight.

**Disclosure of Interest:** None Declared