



## Original Article

# Designing Effective Printed Education Material for Childhood Blindness

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**Purpose:** To review developing strategies of support materials for parents especially in low-wages & low-literate communities for timely diagnosis and early management of Childhood Blindness

**Introduction:** All methodologies adopted to enhance the readability, effectiveness, and comprehensibility of Printed Education Material (PEMs) for the communities have been discussed critically. Significance of consultation with experts and community while developing PEMs has also been discussed.

**Material and Methods:** The PEMs selected are recently designed posters on two major causes of Childhood Blindness (CBL) and low-vision; viz, Amblyopia and Squint. These will urge parents for timely diagnosis and early management of these diseases through awareness.

**Results:** Designing effective PEMs is a methodological strategy that requires planning and constructive community approach. Language, social context, and pictorial illustrations used in PEMs used must be acceptable to the community

**Conclusion:** Designing PEMs that truly depict perceived and real needs of the community has a great value but enhancing skills in graphic designing also help polish competence level of involved professional

### Introduction:

Childhood blindness is often managed inappropriately due to misconceptions about diseases and lack of attention and awareness. This task is particularly challenging for low- wages parents who are not learned enough to comprehend previous PEMs<sup>1</sup>.

Keeping in view the need for PEMs directed at low- wages, low-literate parents, Information Education and Communication (IEC) department of College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences (COAVS) has designed easy-to-read posters on childhood blindness. The aim is to urge parents for the prompt treatment of common causes of childhood visual impairment and make them cognizant of blinding diseases requiring serious medical attention. These posters also aim to curtail the use of unsafe conventional home remedies.

### Methodology:

After consultation with health professionals, awareness posters were developed for parents that addressed symptoms and possible treatments/management, consequences if left untreated for Amblyopia and Squint. Posters' contents, graphics, and color scheme were developed according to accepted principles of communications design. Appropriate colors were selected for highlighting different issues without diverting the attention of the reader. Sizes of the texts chosen were to differentiate headings from text and promoted readability.

The self designed readability formula was used to evaluate the minimum readability level required to grasp the posters' written messages effectively. The material is readable at the eighth grade level.

Snapshots of the children used were taken after getting written informed consent from their parents. Ages of the children correspond to severity of the diseases when prompt actions can help to mitigate the chances of visual impairment and blindness. Ages of the children were selected after consultation with Consultant Pediatric Ophthalmologist.

The final product was reviewed for content and structure by a pediatric Ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist, pediatric nurse and more than twenty eye care professionals and post graduate trainees. Community members reviewed the materials and were asked a series of questions regarding comprehensibility, effectiveness, readability level and originality of these posters. Most mothers approved of the format and agreed with the content.

Graphic tool and software used to design the posters was CorelDraw®, Adobe Photoshop® and Urdu Inpage®.

Final approval was taken from Health Department (Technical Sections), Punjab before disseminating these posters to all Executive District Officers, District Head Quarter

hospitals and Tehsil Head Quarter Hospitals in the province of Punjab.

### Results:

Designing effective PEMs is a methodological strategy that requires planning and constructive community approach. The concerned persons should have factual acquaintance of the problems that are highly significant for the targeted community. Participation of clinical staff while designing PEMs is of great value as they not only have true understanding of the blinding diseases but also the essence of the message that should be imparted to targeted users. Language, social context, and pictorial illustrations used must be acceptable to the community and hence need careful consideration. Though designing PEMs that truly depict perceived and real needs of the community has a great value but enhancing skills in graphic designing also help polish competence level of involved professional considerably to create an eye catching and effective design.

### Discussion:

The designed material provides parents with the information to understand Amblyopia and Squint as one the major causes of childhood blindness and identify the appropriate and timely actions to be taken<sup>2</sup>. These conditions have potentially severe consequences as they may result in permanent vision loss. Designed PEMs also emphasize that early management and treatment offer long-term benefits as these blinding diseases may have the lifelong impact on visual function and physical appearance, with severe consequences for education, sports and career. Therefore, it is critically vital to make parents understand the importance of early diagnosis and management of these potentially blinding diseases. Furthermore, these posters also describe exact ages parents should bring their children for comprehensive eye examination by a competitive pediatric ophthalmologist/eye care professionals to maximize the chances to get benefit from the prescribed treatment. Parents' knowledge and awareness on the issues facilitates improve decision making for diagnosis and prompt treatment to avoid blindness.

Poster provides basic instructions which emphasize the benefits of the desired behavior with simple language to maximize its utility and compressibility. Its durability and attractiveness encourage the parent to keep it as a good awareness reference tool. Although this tool cannot solve the structural problems that cause inappropriate use of Out Patient Department (OPD) facilities in eye care departments all over the Punjab and primary health care services, nor address all childhood blindness illnesses and symptoms that may arise, these posters make parents with the knowledgeable they need to cope with major blinding eye





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### **CLÁUSULA DÉCIMA QUARTA - DAS MULTA E INDENIZAÇÕES**

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