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Importance of technology in healthcare and its current contribution

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Dr. Rishi Raj Borah, Country Director, Orbis India talks about Cybersight and the role of technology in access to healthcare in todayâ??s scenario

Much of the current focus in health care is on the immediate challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and rightfully so. Those looking beyond the current crisis are already seeing a major shift in the way we experience health care in the future. Health care technology such as tele-medicine and the use of geographic data to track disease is already showing promising results and have the potential to become permanent realities.

About Cybersight

Cybersight is a boundary-pushing, not-for-profit telemedicine initiative founded by Orbis to help mitigate the shortage of skilled eye health professionals in low-and middle-income countries as well as help those in remote areas combat geographic isolation.

With advanced online training tools and access to international expert faculty and trainers, Cybersight is equal parts library, school and remote-medicine service. Cybersight is a global platform that helps eye health professionals improve their skills, collaborate on diagnosis and treatment of their patients and connect with a truly global community of practice that includes technicians, nurses, optometrists and ophthalmologists.

Cybersight Consult now supports Artificial Intelligence (AI) grading of color fundus images attached to consultation cases. The system is capable of detecting and visualising glaucoma, macular disease and diabetic retinopathy,

This service is available free of charge to eye health professionals in low- and middle-income countries.

All content on Cybersight is designed to be accessible to everyone, including people in remote locations, through computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones, even under conditions of low connectivity.

The impact created by Cybersight and its relevance in today’s situation

Honored with the highest award of the American Telemedicine Association President's Award for Health Delivery, Quality and Transformation in 2010, Cybersight continues to connect professionals, clinics, hospitals, health systems and NGOs to reduce the global burden of avoidable blindness.

Through Cybersight we have been able to train and teach eye health professionals in 183 countries out of the total 195 countries in the world. Besides, over 27,000 patient cases were managed and over 30,000 online courses were completed so far.

Few days ago, Cybersight saw its highest ever attendance for a single lecture - 700 people from 96 countries (700 being the maximum that we can host with our current licence).

Our previous record was set earlier in the week and stood at 398 for 3 days.

It is thanks to our investment in technology and innovation that we can continue to deliver best-in-class training, remotely. And it is great to see so many medical practitioners from around the world committed to learn and gear up for what's in store for us after the challenge has been overcome.

Futuristic vision – How will technology help in times to come

The future holds tremendous promise in making universal health coverage a reality by democratizing access to healthcare through the power of technology. In my opinion, focus should be on breaking geographic and socioeconomic boundaries by increasing access to early diagnosis and treatment, improving quality of healthcare and decreasing healthcare cost.