Project Description

The Specialist Diploma in Community Optometry aims to upskill practising optometrists in detecting and managing chronic eye disorders in senior citizens. Beyond Clinical Practicum, a Service-Learning (S-L) experience was designed to provide the adult learners opportunities to apply first hand, the professional knowledge and skills acquired in class. This experience was designed to enable the learners to conduct a full suite of eye tests on elderly residents in the Redhill district, explain to them about any eye conditions that were detected, and make referrals for further follow-up at the hospital, if needed. S-L also exposed these practising optometrists to social inequalities and challenges that may limit access to optometry services. It was hoped that with greater awareness of these constraints and empathy for the disadvantaged, these practising optometrists would provide accessible optometry services that better address these clients’ needs. These applied learning experiences within the community helped to sharpen the adult learners’ clinical skills in working with elderly clients, build their confidence in offering similar eye tests at their outlets and strengthen their empathy for the disadvantaged in the community and role as community optometrists.

The following photos feature the adult learners applying their professional knowledge and skills to provide clinical services to elderly clients during their Service-Learning experience at South Central Family Service Centre on 24 July 2019. Selected students’ reflections had been edited for clarity and conciseness. To maintain confidentiality, the quotes do not correspond to the individuals in the photos.

Interviewing clients to get their medical history

Language Barrier: “with all the skills, pointless if I cannot communicate to client”
Determine vision at given distance

Compassion: “Patience is important because elderly tend to have hearing problems and process information slower.”

Measuring eye pressure

Eye health accessibility: “there are people who are unable to get medical help due to financial issues.”
Determine the health of the eye.

Empathy: “we should care for them as a person, not just “another case”.”

Explaining cataract condition to the elderly.

Communication: “never assume all clients understand everything and explain things clearly to avoid miscommunication.”