

## Assessment of Ocular Morbidity, Knowledge and Barriers to Access Eye Care Services among the Children Live in Offshore Island, Bangladesh

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Offshore Island is the remote and isolated area from the terrestrial mainland. They are deprived of their needs. The children from an offshore island are usually underserved in the case of health care because it is a remote area where the health care systems are quite poor compared to mainland. So, the proper information is required for appropriate planning to reduce underlying causes behind visual deprivation among the surviving children of the Offshore Island. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine ocular morbidities, knowledge, and barriers of eye care services among children in an Offshore Island. Methods: The study team visited, and all data were collected from different rural communities at Sandwip Upazila, Chittagong district for screening the children aged 5-16 years old by doing spot examination. The whole study was conducted in both qualitative and quantitative methods. To determine ocular status of children, examinations were done under skilled Ophthalmologists and Optometrists. A focus group discussion was held. The sample size was 490. It was a community based descriptive study and the sampling method was purposive sampling. Results: In total 490 children, about 56.90% were female and 43.10% were male. Among them 456 were school-going children (93.1%) and 34 were non-school going children (6.9%). In this study the most common ocular morbidity was Allergic Conjunctivitis (35.2%). Other mentionable ocular morbidities were Refractive error (27.7%), Blepharitis (13.8%), Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (7.5%), Strabismus (6.3%) and Amblyopia (6.3%). Most of the non-school going children were involved in different types of domestic work like farming, fishing, etc. About 90.04% children who had different ocular abnormalities could not attend to the doctor due to various reasons. Conclusions: The ocular morbidity was high in rate on the offshore island. Eye health care facility was also not well established there. Awareness should be raised about necessity of maintaining hygiene and eye healthcare among the island people. Timely intervention through available eye care facilities and management can reduce the ocular morbidity rate in that area.

**Keywords :** morbidities, screening, barriers, offshore island, knowledge

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