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| **Title of Research Presentation**Prep vision screening outcomes reflect the social gradient |
| **Background/Objectives**The early detection of vision issues in children has been linked to improved wellbeing, school performance and social and economic outcomes into adulthood. Accordingly, Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service implemented a state-wide vision screening program to promote the early detection of vision abnormalities among prep students. This paper reports on the findings relating to the prevalence and distribution of vision abnormalities among Queensland prep students. **Methods**Vision screening of Queensland prep students has been conducted by community Registered Nurses, using two screening tools: Parr 4m Visual Acuity Test and Welch Allyn Spot Vision Screener. Participant screening results, together with community socio-demographic data were reported. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise data on schools screened, prep students screened and screening outcomes. Tests of association were used to examine the correlation between the number screened, number referred and Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). **Results**The Queensland vision screening program is being implemented in ten of fourteen HHSs, with the remaining four HHSs to commence screening soon. At a state-wide level, 738 of 1,473 schools have participated in the program with 33,706 students screened. Of those students screened, 2,062 (6.1%) received a referral recommendation to see an eye health professional for further assessment. Of these students, data on referral outcome is available for 1,145 (55.5%) with 832 (72.7%) being confirmed with a vision abnormality. The analysis of the vision screening outcomes (passed or referred) by SEIFA quintile shows that the referral rate for further assessment by an eye health professional is negatively associated with SEIFA quintile (x2 =105.24, p <0.001).**Discussion**The prep vision screening referral rate of 6.1% is consistent with other comparable vision screening programs conducted in Australia and internationally. Of particular interest is the clear association between referral of prep students and SEIFA scores, evidencing a social gradient, whereby prep children from lower socio-economic areas are more likely to experience vision abnormalities. This then suggests that vulnerable populations may be more likely to experience undetected vision problems and the associated negative impacts on wellbeing throughout the life-course.**Keywords**Social gradient, vulnerable populations, vision screening, prep children |