

China & Tibet Fact Sheet

SEVA'S WORK AT A GLANCE: In country since 1995 | Partner: 1

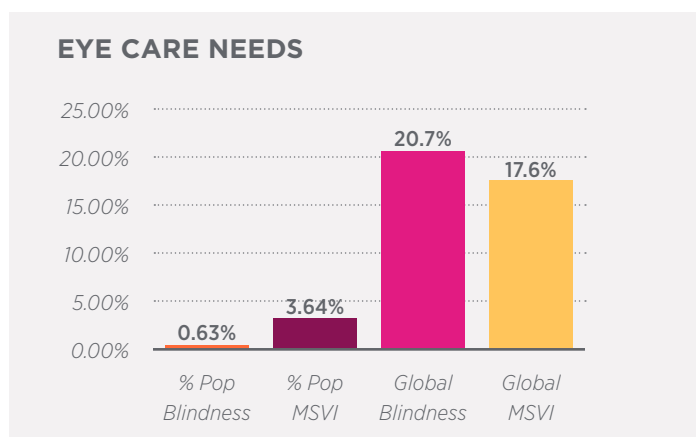


Country Overview

- » China spans 3.7 million square miles
- » China's Population: 1.4 billion
- » Tibet's Population: 3.3 million
- » 2021-22 Human Development Index Ranking: 79 of 191¹

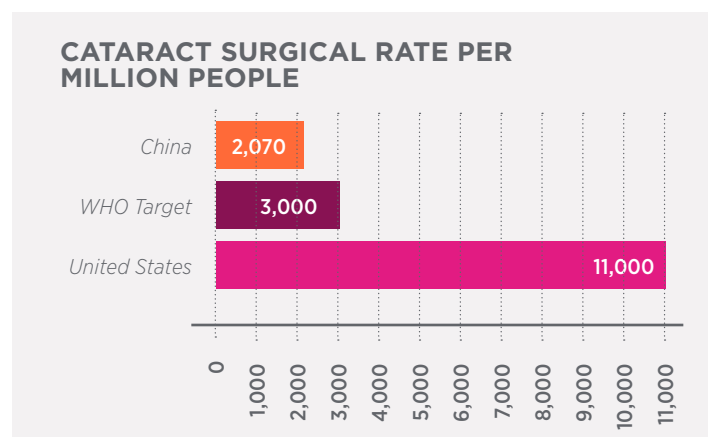
Scope of Eye Care Needs²

- » 0.63% of China's population is blind (8,917,625), as compared to 0.19% in the US
- » 3.64% of the population has moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI (51,941,774), as compared to 2.02% in the United States
- » China accounts for 20.7% of global blindness and 17.6% of global MSVI
- » 20.7% of global blindness
- » 17.6% of global MSVI



Nationwide Eye Care Response

- » China's Cataract Surgical Rate (CSR) was 2,070 surgeries per million in 2017, as compared to the US CSR of 11,000
- » 26.4 ophthalmologists per million people (36,342 total)
- » 1.5 optometrists per million people (2,100 total)
- » 38 Allied Ophthalmic Personnel per million people (52,500 total)



¹ 2021-22 UNDP Human Development Report: https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

² Unless otherwise noted, all country sight statistics from IAPB Vision Atlas: <http://atlas.iapb.org/global-action-plan/gap-indicators/>

Seva's Approach in Western China & Tibet

Seva began working in Tibet in 1995 with a focus on increasing access to eye care through outreach camps and strengthening the capacity of local eye care personnel.

In 2001, Seva partnered with the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) Health Bureau to conduct an assessment on eye care in the region. The resulting outcome showed a high prevalence of blindness due to cataract and poor post-operative visual acuity.³ The need for comprehensive, quality eye care was evident and propelled Seva to open a regional office in Lhasa in 2003. Since then, Seva has supported eye programs in the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP). In 2006, Seva and the Ganzi Prefecture People's Hospital formally partnered to support the creation of the Kham Eye Center (KEC) in Dartsedo.

KEC is located in the western region of China, southeast of the Tibet Plateau. This region has a staggering altitude of 11,463 feet, extremely harsh weather and poor transportation infrastructure. Given that the Kham population lives at a high altitude where they endure strong ultraviolet rays, it is estimated that the prevalence of blinding eye disease like cataract in people over 50 years of age may be three times higher than in mainland China.

Although Seva's Tibet office formally closed in 2015, Seva has continued to work with the KEC. Seva and KEC's partnership has focused on increasing access to eye care services and building the center's capacity through human resource development, technical and managerial mentorship, and supporting critical ophthalmic equipment.

Resources


[Seva's Work in Tibet](#)


[Eye Camps in Tibet](#)

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6858214/>

EYE CARE PERSONNEL

26.4  Ophthalmologists per million people

1.5  Optometrists per million people

38  Ophthalmic personnel per million people

 = 10 million people

SPOTLIGHT ON BUILDING CAPACITY

While a community-based eye center, Kham Eye Center aspires to be a model for national eye care. With Seva's support, eye care specialists from KEC have trained on new surgical techniques, management, and teaching skills at Aravind Eye Care System. As a result of these innovations, KEC is becoming the premiere training and surgical center for Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces and the TAP.

Impact of COVID-19 in China

COVID-19 daily new cases peaked in China in early 2020 with the initial outbreak. By early March 2020, there were 80,000 COVID cases in the country; by September 2021, that figure had rose to 95,000.

After imposing the Zero Covid Policy, the daily new infections seemingly went down until March 2022. However, it rose up very quickly in April/May 2022 at 26,000 cases per day. The number has been under control since June 2022. The Zero Covid Policy and occasional lockdowns have impacted the economy and the other health services in the country.

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