

Lavelle Pharmacy Evaluation Report: Assess the Effectiveness of Pharmacies in Increasing Eyeglasses Coverage among Garment Workers in Gazipur and Savar, Bangladesh

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Joint Report: A Collaborative Approach for Effective Study and Research

“Assessing the Effectiveness of Pharmacies in Increasing Glasses Coverage among Garment Workers in Gazipur and Savar, Bangladesh”

This report is the product of a collaborative effort between the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) and the VisionSpring team, showcasing a joint approach to addressing critical vision care needs among a low-income population.

HDRC contributed its expertise in public health, research design, and development evaluation. The HDRC team was responsible for designing and implementing longitudinal surveys, conducting in-depth interviews, and overseeing field-level data collection. This collaboration with VisionSpring ensured the study maintained the highest standards of accuracy and reliability. HDRC also led the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, delivering essential insights into the impact of the interventions. Their contextual understanding of local socioeconomic factors enriched the interpretation of findings and strengthened the relevance of the recommendations.

VisionSpring provided the technical framework and programmatic insights that guided the study, sharing their innovative vision care model, operational experience, research expertise, and strategic direction. VisionSpring’s Clear Vision Workplace (CVW) and Pharmacy programs were central to this evaluation, offering scalable and cost-effective approaches to improving access to glasses for workers.

This report reflects the synergy between HDRC’s methodological rigor and VisionSpring’s programmatic expertise. The findings underscore the effectiveness of linking pharmacies to vision care initiatives and highlight the importance of marketing and awareness campaigns in promoting glasses adoption among workers.

This collaborative effort illustrates how strategic partnerships can effectively address pressing public health challenges. It is our hope that the insights and recommendations provided will serve as a valuable resource for future interventions and inspire innovation in delivering accessible and affordable vision care to underserved communities.

Dhaka, December 2024

Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) & VisionSpring

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Our sincere appreciation goes to the HDRC data collection team, whose meticulous efforts ensured the integrity and reliability of the survey data, often working tirelessly in challenging field conditions. Additionally, we extend special thanks to the HDRC research team for their exceptional work in designing, analyzing, and drafting this report.

We are also grateful to the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) for providing ethical oversight and constructive recommendations, which ensured that the research adhered to the highest standards.

We acknowledge the contribution of all partners and supporters.

Abbreviations

BDT	Bangladesh Taka
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
CVW	Clear Vision Workplace
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
IDI	In-depth Interview
IHE	Institute of Health Economics
Km	Kilometres
NPV	Net Present Value
PP	Pharmacy Project
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VQoL	Visual Quality of Life
VS	VisionSpring

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Executive Summary

Linking pharmacies with the CVW program, supported by marketing campaigns, improved glasses coverage among garment workers. This linkage helped to increase the adoption of glasses and the purchase of a second pair and created a meaningful impact on vision and quality of life.

The findings indicate that marketing efforts are crucial in driving engagement and maintaining the glasses coverage rate in the long run.

Background

This report assesses the cost-effectiveness of pharmacies selling reading glasses near Clear Vision Workplaces (CVWs), supported by targeted marketing campaigns, as a strategy to improve glasses coverage among garment workers in manufacturing zones. The study, conducted under the VisionSpring Clear Vision Workplace (CVW) and Pharmacy Project (PP), aimed to increase access to affordable glasses and address common vision issues including presbyopia among low-income population.

The combination of CVW and PP was intended to create a scalable model to provide affordable vision care to the garment workers. The CVW program facilitated vision examinations and glasses provision to correct the vision of workers in their prime working ages, while the PP provided access to reading glasses through pharmacies located near these workplaces.

The evaluation focused on four distinct cohorts,

- Intervention Arm I (pharmacies near CVW factories without marketing campaigns)
- Intervention Arm II (pharmacies near CVW factories with a clear marketing link)
- Control cohort (CVW factories without nearby pharmacies that sell glasses)
- Counterfactual cohort (pharmacies near factories but without CVW involvement).

Methods

The evaluation design was longitudinal with baseline, midline, and endline surveys. A random sampling technique selected 846 respondents across the four cohorts. Data collection approaches included structured face-to-face interviews with garment workers and pharmacy customers and in-depth interviews with pharmacy owners to assess the effectiveness of the project in improving vision care access.

Results Summary

The program sought to improve awareness, access, and uptake of eye care services through a combination of clear vision workplace (CVWs) and pharmacy-based interventions.

1. CVW Enables Awareness and Utilization of Eye Care Services

- The program successfully reached a population with limited prior access to eye care services

- While 51% of workers were aware of the need for routine eye checkups, only 9% had ever undergone an eye examination before participating in the program
- Group discussions revealed that eye problems were often ignored, as workers prioritized other livelihood needs over vision care

2. The Marketing Campaign Drove Sales and Engagement

- Pharmacies near CVW factories with marketing campaigns (Intervention Arm II) outperformed other cohorts in sales and greater customer engagement. There was a major uptick in pharmacy sales of reading glasses in intervention arm II immediately after marketing campaign, that was not seen in the other arms. In addition, intervention arm II saw a rise in repeat purchases (31% of sales), with factory workers actively referring to their colleagues

3. Pharmacy-CVW Linkage Boosted Glasses Coverage

- The CVW program raised glasses coverage (how many workers who need glasses own them) from 12.5% to 100%
- CVW screenings-built trust, making workers more likely to visit pharmacies and purchase replacement reading glasses
- Pharmacies supported by CVW programs sold more reading glasses than the counterfactual cohort (68 vs. 31 pairs by endline)
- The distribution of a first pair of glasses led to a substantial demand for additional pairs within the first 15 months of the program
- Among those who received glasses through CVW program (intervention arms 1 and 2), 28–30% purchased a second pair
- In contrast, 53% of those who initially bought reading glasses from a pharmacy went on to purchase a second pair

4. Glasses Improved Visual Quality of Life (VQoL)

- More than 75% of the respondents reported experiencing an improvement in their daily life after using VisionSpring glasses, including reading, removing stones from rice, and threading a needle. Scores on a vision-related quality of life index also improved over the course of the study
- Benefits included reduction in headaches and blurred vision

5. Program Satisfaction

- Satisfaction levels were significantly higher in areas where the CVW program was present (84–88%) compared to areas where only pharmacy services were available (68%)

6. Worker Demographics and Access to Services

- Most factory workers lived within 2 km of their workplace
- Pharmacies were commonly visited on the way back from work or during weekends.
- The majority of study participants had a baseline monthly income of less than \$200

7. Challenges in Pharmacy Engagement

- Retaining pharmacy participation in the program proved challenging. Several pharmacies withdrew, citing various reasons, which impacted program continuity

- Efforts were made to replace these pharmacies; however, this turnover made it difficult to accurately interpret trends in pharmacy-based glasses sales

Implications

- *Marketing as a Critical Component:* There is a need to support targeted marketing campaigns that promote eye care awareness and services at pharmacies, focusing on encouraging customers to get their first pair of glasses and return for follow-up purchases. Provide incentives for pharmacies to run local advertising to reach communities and increase awareness. This will help create sustained engagement with eye care and ensure people continue to prioritize their eye health
- *CVW-Pharmacy Synergy:* Encourage funding opportunities to partner with pharmacies to offer free or discounted eye screenings for their employees. This could be easily implemented by having pharmacies set up screening stations at workplaces or nearby locations. Subsidized services could be offered for employees to get glasses or follow-up care, creating a simple and effective model that makes vision care easily accessible and affordable
- *Enhancing Quality of Life:* Integration of basic vision care into workplace wellness programs, offering employees access to free eye screenings and subsidized glasses. By addressing vision issues early, workers will see improvements in productivity and feel more confident. This intervention can also lead to better social interactions and a more engaged workforce. Programs should prioritize vision care as a part of employee well-being., knowing that clear vision leads to better overall performance and satisfaction