

Editorial

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Causes of Blindness Worldwide

There are about 45 million blind people in the world, with a further 135 million suffering from visual impairment. Around 90 percent of these people are in developing countries. Around 60 percent of the world's blind live in sub-Saharan Africa, China and India. In the developed world, sight problems are mostly caused by age related conditions, with one person in six over the age of 75 being blind or partially sighted.

Glaucoma is considered to be the third largest cause of blindness after cataract and trachoma, responsible for approximately 15 percent of world blindness, according to WHO. More than 80 percent of these cases are in the developing world. Early signs of Glaucoma don't tend to be noticed by individuals, unless there is a pain present. Glaucoma cannot be prevented but sight loss can be avoided if the disease is detected and treated at an early stage.

Diabetic retinopathy is the most common cause of vision loss in the working population of many developed countries.

AMD is the leading cause of blindness in people aged over 60 in the western world. Conservative estimates put the number of people who are blind or severely disabled because of AMD at around 8 million. With the current global trend of population aging, the importance of AMD as a public health problem will certainly increase. The magnitude of this problem is such that individual efforts at finding solutions are mere drops in the ocean. What is required is a gigantic collective effort on the part of

(A) Government Agencies; (B) Ophthalmic Health Care Providers;

(C) NGO's; (D) Benevolent Industrialist Doners;

(E) Other Interested Individuals, to reformulate plans & executive them speedily & in a timebound manner.

Only then shall we be able to overcome this crisis of vision.

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Kumar Doctor