

Tamil Nadu Diabetic Retinopathy

Introduction

The intervention aims to reduce the blindness caused due to diabetic retinopathy (DR). District level capacity at the government health system for effective screening, diagnosis and management (primary to tertiary) of diabetic retinopathy using technology were built. Arvind Eye Hospital (AEH) was partnered for the training of NCD nurses and doctors on treating diabetic retinopathy. The pilot project shows a widespread presence of DR.

Key Stakeholders

- Government of Tamil Nadu
- Arvind Eye Care System
- Public Health Foundation of India (for trainings and capacity building)

Implementation

- The pilot model was implemented in Tirunelveli district at 5 CHC's and 13 PHC's
- *Training and Capacity:* Training of NCD staff, Government ophthalmologist and paramedical ophthalmic assistants, on relevant topics for DR screening and ophthalmic instrument handling was provided by Arvind Eye Hospital.
- *Patient's treatment flow:* Any patient with diabetes using that government health facility was screened for DR. NCD staff or nurses at that facility is in charge for the screening process, referral, and follow-ups.

Results of the practice

The project reveals the prevalence of DR among the registered population in 18 CHC/PHCs from five blocks in the Tirunelveli district where the project was implemented.

Lessons Learnt

- Patients follow-up were very low. Only 7% of them came for follow up check-up in one month
- NCD nurses were frequently transferred, so the training and capacity building had to be done for the new staff

Conclusion

This project harnesses the growth of technology and existing government health facilities to identify and treat the patient for diabetic retinopathy at district level. This scheme is easily scalable by training the existing workforce and establishing reading & grading centers at district level. Government of Tamil Nadu has planned to roll out the second phase in three other districts of Tamil Nadu with funding from Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust. AEH has been selected as training partner for the second phase as well.

Further Readings

- i.* http://www.nrhmtn.gov.in/gos/GoMsNo_47_19.pdf
- ii.* <http://www.ijo.in/article.asp?issn=03014738;year=2020;volume=68;issue=13;spage=78;epage=82;aualast=Ramakrishnan#ref7>