

Analyzing the Prevalence and Awareness of Glaucoma in Linden, Guyana

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Abstract

Introduction: World Health Organization features glaucoma as the leading cause of irreversible blindness. Studies have proven persons undiagnosed and late diagnosed are related to glaucoma that is associated with visual disability. Lack of awareness and screening are the major reasons why persons are undiagnosed and late diagnosed. In a newspaper article published on March 11, 2018, Dr. Sugrism (Guyana's Head Ophthalmologist) stated that the prevalence of glaucoma in Guyana has not been calculated however, Linden, Guyana has had an increased number of cases. Moreover, this research calculated the prevalence and analyzed the awareness of glaucoma in Linden, Guyana.

Methods: A prevalence survey was conducted to determine the number of glaucoma cases in Linden, Guyana over the past two years. Questionnaire based survey and interviews involving residents of Linden 30 years and over evaluated the awareness of glaucoma by investigating the percent of persons who have a basis understanding of glaucoma.

Results: Four hundred and three cases of glaucoma were calculated with female (68%) carrying a higher percentage compared to males (32%). The most common risk factors included genetics and persons ages 40 and over. Ninety-two percent of the cases reported were primary open angle glaucoma and the remaining eight percent was listed as angle closure glaucoma. Eighty-seven of the ninety-two percent cases of primary open angle were late diagnosed. As a result, forty percent have already achieved blindness even after undergoing surgery due to the optic nerve being severely damaged before the diagnosis. In analyzing the awareness, fifty-three percent of residents interviewed knows what is glaucoma but lacks the basis understanding of glaucoma. And even though there is free accessible eye care service in every community sixty percent have never done an eye examination. Many are mostly lead to eye care services when signs and symptoms are noticed hence, the late diagnosis of glaucoma.

Conclusion: Lack of awareness of Glaucoma in Linden, Guyana has led to an increase number of cases and blindness associated with glaucoma.

Keywords: Glaucoma; ophthalmologist; blindness.