


Importance of the study of retinopathies in public health

Importancia del estudio de las retinopatías en salud pública

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The importance of the study of retinopathy in public health is because almost 3% of global blindness is attributed to diabetic retinopathy, according to data provided by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). At the national level, from the National Eye Health Program of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSP and BS), patients diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus are urged to attend check-ups at ophthalmological clinics.

Currently, in Paraguay, we are in the planning stage for further development of the new Rapid Survey of Preventable Blindness (RAAB) and the Tool for Analysis of the Ocular Health Situation (ECSAT) within the Paraguayan National Vision Commission (CONAVIP) under the advice of PAHO. We hope to understand the current state of eye health in our country and thereby determine new objectives for the next National Eye Health Plan, which dates to 2011.

Together with CONAVIP, the Paraguayan Society of Ophthalmology (SPO), and PAHO, they are developing a program for the introduction of ophthalmology at the primary care level, since the sense of sight is not isolated from the rest of the body, based on multiple systemic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, the most prevalent pathologies that can lead to retinopathies and a probable cause of blindness.

The pandemic has left us with invaluable experience in the practice of teleophthalmology, both in its potential and limitations. The most disruptive aspect is related to Artificial Intelligence applied in ophthalmology, especially in the detection and diagnosis of Diabetic Retinopathy in children and young adults, making it more expensive for children and young adults to have a young population with visual disabilities.

There are many challenges in Paraguay regarding the scope of detection and treatment of diabetic retinopathy, but through strategies focused on the aforementioned points, we will be able to change the situation in our territory, towards better visual health and quality of life. for our patients.