

Glaucoma in Africa: Will we be Able to Achieve the Objectives Set by the WHO's Initiative "Vision 2020"?

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Vision 2020 or "Right to Sight" is a global initiative to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020. It was launched in 1999 by WHO with the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness.

Cataracts and glaucoma are the two major causes of visual impairment in all regions of the world [1,2]. If surgery treatment can solve the cataract problem, situation is different for glaucoma. Under this condition the early diagnosis and monitoring lifetime are fundamental to observe [2-5].

In Republic of Congo glaucoma diagnosis is often delayed for several reasons, among others the delay of consultation, the lack of systematic screening in affected families [1-3].

The second problem is the lifetime monitoring. The Republic of Congo has only ten active ophthalmologists in the two major cities, Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, for 4 millions of population (one ophthalmologist for 400'000 persons). Monitoring is therefore impossible in rural areas, the situation is also difficult in urban area. Health insurance does not exist; patients must themselves pay for their drugs. Most are unable to buy basic anti-glaucoma eye drops for life. Only a tiny minority can use every day last generation anti-glaucoma eye drops (Prostaglandin analogues, combined eye drops).

The third difficulty is the lack of will to learn or the ignorance of glaucoma. The majority of patients do not take the time to know their disease. Even the pronunciation of "glaucoma" word is difficult for most of them. Thus the refusal of surgical treatment is almost the rule. Indeed it is difficult for patients to accept the idea that the surgical treatment they have to pay, sometimes for a month of his salary, only serves to regulate intraocular pressure and not to improve vision.

We do not have exact data of other black Africa countries. However the realities in health strategy are substantially the same. Is it possible to improve this situation in this years which separate us to 2020? The question is still relevant.

Conflicts of Interest

None.

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