

Eye Donation Awareness among the Students

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT :

Blindness is a worldwide problem. Corneal blindness accounts for 0.9% of blindness in India. Approximately 0.12 million people are corneal blind. Restoration of their vision is possible only through transplantation. Though 45000 eyes are collected every year, it does not meet half the requirement. Well informed medical students could be expected to enhance eye donation rates.

To study the awareness of the patient about the eye donation is assessed. This cross-sectional type of study was conducted in 200 Life sciences students. All the required information was collected on pretested, semi-structured questionnaire.

All the students know that eye can be donated. 170 students tell that there is no age limit for eye donation. 'Eyes can be removed from living peoples' this answer is told by 185 students. 155 students told that consent of family is not required for the pledging. 170 students told that there is shortage of donors in India.

The results of the study indicate that although awareness regarding eye donation is high, there is lack of motivation related to eye donation.

Keywords: Eye donation, students, corneal blindness.

INTRODUCTION:

Act of donating one's eyes after his/her death is Eye donation. Merely corneal blinds can be helped through this procedure not other Blinds. It is an action of help, mainly for the assistance of the society and is totally charitable. It is done after death. So eye-donation should be exhilarated in a large scale, as one of the best means of communal service. To allow another person get vision is one of the best procedures of charity. Even after death the donor lives in the eyes of recipient. Eyes from a dead person can enable two blind people to acquire vision.

The eyes, which are received through such generous gestures, are of great advantage to the society. The tissue of the eye called as cornea can be used to return vision to corneal blind person. The other servings of the eye are also used for research and development of medical studies.

The Cornea is the clear tissue covering the front of the eye. It is a concentrating component of the eye. The Vision is decreased or vanished if the cornea becomes cloudy. This loss of the vision is stated as corneal blindness.

Corneal blindness can be treated by removing the damaged cornea and replacing it with a healthy cornea. Corneal grafting is only the alternative for the corneal blindness. Synthetic corneas have not yet been developed and hence the only source for cornea is from our human beings. The first corneal transplant took place in 1905 [1].

There are a few more compelling reasons why you need to donate your eyes and these include:

1. 1.5% of the population are unnecessarily blind
2. 25% live below the poverty line
3. 2.5 million children are suffering, including those who don't have the correct spectacles

4. 32% are under 15
5. 60% of blind children will not make it to adulthood. A cumulative economic loss to India's GNP of US\$11.1 billion
6. 75% live in rural areas
7. There are 12,000 ophthalmologists in the country but the majorities of them live and work in the urban areas
8. 40% live in rural areas in central & northern India where there is little access to quality eye care services

In India 15 million peoples are blind currently. Out of the 15 million blind peoples 6.8 million are suffer from corneal blindness with vision less than 6/60 in at least one eye.

The major problem in India is that eye donation has not yet become popular. Though, the studies have shown that 50% of the general population were aware of "eye collection" in India, less than 5% knew that this should be done within the first 6 hrs of death and 20% had heard about corneal transplantation. [2] In India, thousands of people remain blind due to non-availability of donor. The annual requirement of 75,000 to 1,00,000 corneas, only 22,000 corneas are donated in India at present. Cornea, the main focusing part of the eye, is the clear front surface of the eye. Like a "window", it allows light to enter the eye. Vision could be markedly reduced or lost if the cornea becomes "cloudy" or scarred. It is unfortunate that over 1 million citizens of this country are suffering from corneal blindness.

There is further addition of 40,000 to 50,000 corneal blind persons every year. Restoration of their vision is possible only through transplantation of cornea from donated eyes.

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Currently, in India the collection is ~22 thousand eyes a year, [3] which are negligible to the requirement. Corneal transplant is only possible through cornea donation. There is currently no substitute for human corneal tissue. India needs at least one lakh donated eyes annually. According to the Union Health Ministry only 30% of donated eyes are used for treatment of corneal blindness. [4]

Medical professionals can enhance eye donation rates by educating and motivating the relatives in case of patient's death. Hence the present study was undertaken with an objective of assessing the pro factors for eye donation among medical students. Additional objective of this study was to find out perceptions about eye health care among them.

Methodology [5-7]:

This cross-sectional type of study was conducted in 200 Life sciences students. All the required information was collected on pretested, semi-structured questionnaire.

Objectives:

1. To find the awareness in nursing student regarding Eye donation.
2. To find the source of information about Eye donation.
3. To know the perceived reasons for donating eyes by donors.
4. To find the main causes for not donating eyes.

Result & Discussion:

There are total 200 students were enrolled into the study. Out of the 200 students, 110 are the males & 90 were females. Table 1 shows the Awareness About Eye donation.

Table 1 Awareness About Eye donation

Sr. No.	Questions	Answers		
		Yes	No	Unknown
1	Eyes can be donated	200	-	-
2	There is age limit for eye donation	5	170	25
3	Eyes are removed from living people	1	185	5
4	Consent of family required for pledging	55	140	5
5	There is shortage of donors in India	170	10	20

From the table 1, that all the students know that eye can be donated. 170 students tell that there is no age limit for eye donation. 'Eyes can be removed from living peoples' this answer is told by 185 students. 155 students told that consent of family is not required for the pledging. 170 students told that there is shortage of donors in India.

Table 2: Knowledge about eye donation

Sr. No.	Questions	Answers		
		Yes	No	Unknown
1	Eyes should be removed within 6 hours of death	140	20	40
2	Transplantation should be done within 2-3days of removal	110	105	5
3	Synthetic substitutes for cornea are present	10	170	20
4	Knows where to donate eyes	80	70	50

The 140 students told that 'eyes should be removed within 6 hours'. 110 students told that transplantation should be

done within 2-3 days. The 170 students knows that synthetic substitutes were not available in the market. Half of the students knows where to donate the eyes.

Table 3 Source of information on eye donation

Source	Number
TV	80
Newspaper	30
Magazine	15
Poster	8
Doctors	15
Radio	12
Friends	7
Family	12
Internet	21

Table 3 indicates the source of information they had received about the eye donation. The major source of the information is the television.

The level of knowledge and attitude of students are important determinants in promoting eye donations as they are the future potential donors. It is a matter of fact that health in a community or a society will surely improve when doctors play an active role in health education and become a good role model in the society. In many countries including India the decision to donate eyes ultimately lies with family members. Many potential donors may be missed if doctors fail to approach family members about the possibility of eye donation and if they lack sufficient knowledge about eye donation to answer questions or concerns of family members after death of the donors.

Conclusion:

The outcomes of the study focus the fact that although most of the students are in goodwill of active involvement to transmit knowledge, but absence of awareness is the main obstacle. Simply media promotion is not sufficient to rise the responsiveness regarding eye health care and eye donation.

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