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CL176- ESTIMATING VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI) CAUSED BY DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Marta Inês Silva¹, Ana Marta Padrão², Paulo Rocha³, António Filipe Macedo⁴, Rui Santana⁵, Cristina Freitas⁶, Amândio Rocha Sousa⁷, F. Falcão-Reis⁷

(¹ Serviço Oftalmologia, Centro Hospitalar de São João, ² Centro Hospitalar de São João, ³ Serviço de Oftalmologia, Centro Hospitalar de São João, ⁴ Laboratório de Reabilitação Visual, Departamento de Física e Optometria, Universidade do Minho, ⁵ Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, ⁶ Serviço de Oftalmologia, Hospital de Braga, ⁷ Serviço de Oftalmologia, Centro Hospitalar de São João; Departamento dos Órgãos dos Sentidos, Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Coimbra)

Introduction: Public health measures for vision care in Portugal are targeting diabetic retinopathy. The aim of these policies is to reduce the burden of the disease and the number of people reaching levels of visual impairment. The aim of this study was to estimate the percentage of visually impaired patients due to diabetic retinopathy attending a large tertiary hospital.

Material and Methods: As part of an observational study to estimate the prevalence and costs of visual impairment in Portugal (PCVIP study), clinical records of all patients attending the ophthalmology department of a tertiary hospital were analysed looking for patients meeting the inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria were: i) presenting visual acuity in the better eye <5/10 (20/40) and/or ii) visual field less than 20deg. Diagnosis of cases with VI were classified according with ICD9. Results reported here were selected from the total number of patients with VI by filtering ICD9 codes starting by 3620.

Results: In 18 weeks, 2821 cases of visual impairment were detected. A total of 941 (33%) were caused by diabetic retinopathy and its complications. The mean age of the patients with VI caused by DR was 69 years (IQR: 64-76) and 52% were female. In the age range 60-79 years, diabetic retinopathy was responsible for more than 50% of the cases of VI. Projections for 52 weeks (one calendar year) indicate that DR might be responsible for 39% of the cases of VI in this hospital.

Conclusion: Visual impairment caused by DR remains high amongst patients attending ophthalmology departments in Portugal. These numbers are particularly concerning because many patients are within the range of the working age. Further data collection is necessary to improve the accuracy of our estimates and further studies need to investigate if there are modifiable factors that can reduce the burden of DR.

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