



ABSTRACT

Introduction Glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the world. Blindness caused by glaucoma is irreversible. The commonest type of primary glaucoma open angle glaucoma (POAG), is asymptomatic until last stage of the disease. Therefore early detection & regular follow up of these patients is essential to prevent permanent disability.

Objective To describe the socio demographic characteristics, assess the knowledge on glaucoma, treatment compliance and proportion with known risk factors among patients attending glaucoma clinics at Eye Hospital, Colombo with a view identifying existing knowledge and recommendation to improve compliance.

Methods A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out at glaucoma clinics in Eye hospital Colombo during the period August – November 2008. Diagnosed glaucoma patients attending glaucoma clinics of Eye hospital Colombo were selected for the study. An interviewer administered pre tested questionnaire and a data extraction form were used for data collection interviews.

Results Among the 431 glaucoma patients a majority were females 57.5% (n=248). Male female ratio was 1:1.4.. More than 40% (n=173) were elderly 10% (n=43) were less than 40 years. Seventy three point eighty percent (n= 318) were Buddhist and 87.5% (n=377) Sinhala. Among patients 76.1% (n=328) were currently married and 28.1% (n=121) had \geq AL and 36.9% (n=159) had < O/L education. Among male glaucoma patients 53.6% (n=98) and among female patients 37.5% (n=93) were employed. Fifty

one percent (n=251) had a monthly income >Rs 10,000. Glaucoma was present in both eyes in 85.8% (n=370) of patients. All patients were on ocular medication while 16.4% (n=71) were on both oral & topical medications. Among patients 44.4% (n=191) had the disease ≤ 2 years and 42.5% (n=183) had the disease for ≥ 4 years. Thirty eight point eight percent (n=167) named the disease as glaucoma while 45.5% (n=196) referred to as eye pressure. Knowledge on name of disease was significantly higher in those less than 60 years compared to equal or more than 60 years ($p=0.04$) Among patients 15.3% (n=66) had knowledge on currently used medication. $< O/L$ and $\geq O/L$ education ($p=0.001$). The overall knowledge on glaucoma among patients attending Eye hospital Colombo was not satisfactory. Only 24.3 % (n=105) had good knowledge, while 40.6% (n=175) had moderate overall knowledge. Overall knowledge was significantly higher in those with $\geq O/L$ ($p<0.001$) compared to those with $< O/L$, employed compared to unemployed; ($p<0.001$) those with higher monthly income >Rs10, 000 compared to lower income (up to Rs. 10,000) ($p<0.001$). Among glaucoma patients 74.5% (n=321) were in a view that blindness caused by glaucoma is irreversible. Compliance of glaucoma patients on their medication was good in, 65.1% (n=280) and poor in 15.7% (n=68). Compliance to treatment was significantly higher ($p<0.001$) in those less than 60 years compared to ≥ 60 years; those with O/L or more than O/L ($p< 0.001$) compared to $< O/L$ and monthly income > Rs. 10,000($p=0.001$). Presence of diabetes & hypertension was 23.2 % and 16% respectively.

Conclusions Among 431 patients 57.5%(n=248) were female, 40.2%(n=173) were male. Patients with ≥ 60 years were 40.2%(n=173), 63%(n=272) had $\geq O/L$ education, 51%(n=251) had > Rs.10000 monthly income.

Among patients 84.8%(n=370) knew the name of the disease, while 38.7%(n=167) named as glaucoma, 45.5%(n=196) referred as eye pressure. All patients were on ocular medications. Forty four point four percent patients(n=191) had the disease for a period of ≤ 2 years and 42.5%(n=183) had the disease for ≥ 4 years duration. Among patient 74.5%(n=321) knew that blindness caused by glaucoma is not reversible and 27.8%(n=121) attend glaucoma clinics with view to improve their vision with medication. Overall knowledge on glaucoma among patients attending Eye hospital Colombo was not satisfactory. Sixty five percent (n=280) had good compliance to treatment and 15.7%(n=68) had poor compliance. Almost all patients had acquired knowledge on glaucoma from doctors. Prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among patients were 23.2% and 19% respectively.

Recommendations Health education programmes on glaucoma should be strengthened.

Key words : Glaucoma, Knowledge, Compliance