

Brief Communication - 1

Diabetic Retinopathy:

What is the Physician's Role

Sandeep Parekh MD, Kamaljeet Singh MS,
Sarita Bajaj MD

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a vascular disorder affecting the microvasculature of the retina. It is estimated that diabetes mellitus affects 4 percent of the world's population, almost half of whom have some degree of DR at any given time¹. DR occurs both in type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus and has been shown that nearly all type 1 and 75 per cent of type 2 diabetes will develop DR after 15 yr duration of diabetes as shown in earlier epidemiological studies.^{2,3}

Physicians Role: Regular eye check-up is a must and best way is to examine the fundus after dilating the pupils.

Recommendations for patients with type 1 diabetes include an eye examination within the first five years of onset and then at least annually. Patients with type 2 diabetes should be examined as soon as they are diagnosed and then at least annually.

American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends following goals:

- Provide visual rehabilitation for patients with visual loss.
- Identify patients at risk for diabetic retinopathy.

Motilal Nehru Medical College
Allahabad

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Whales were once land mammals that moved to the sea and adapted to marine life.

- Encourage involvement of the patient and primary care physician in the management of the patient's systemic disorder.
- Encourage and provide lifelong evaluation of retinopathy progression.
- Minimize the side effects of treatment that might adversely affect the patient's vision and/or vision-related quality of life.
- Provide visual rehabilitation for patients with visual loss from the disease or refer for visual rehabilitation.

References

- 1) Aiello LP, Gardner TW, King GL, Blankenship G, Cavallerano JD, Ferris FL 3rd, et al. Diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes Care. 1998; 21: 143-5
- 2) Klein R, Klein BE, Moss SE, Davis MD, DeMets DL. The Wisconsin Epidemiologic Study of Diabetic Retinopathy-II. Prevalence and risk of diabetic retinopathy when age at diagnosis is less than 30 years. Arch Ophthalmol. 1984; 102: 520-6
- 3) Klein R, Klein BEK, Moss SE, Davis MD, DeMets DL. The Wisconsin epidemiologic study of diabetic retinopathy-III. Prevalence and risk of diabetic retinopathy when age at diagnosis is 30 or more years. Arch Ophthalmol. 1984; 102 : 527-32