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Pediatric keratoconus in a tertiary referral center: Incidence, presentation, risk factors, and treatment

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Purpose: To report the incidence, clinical presentation, risk factors, and treatment outcome of pediatric keratoconus in a tertiary referral eye hospital in Beirut, Lebanon.

Methods: In this retrospective study, the authors evaluated all patients with keratoconus 14 years or younger newly diagnosed at the Beirut Eye Specialist Hospital, Beirut, Lebanon, between January 2010 and December 2014. The incidence of pediatric keratoconus among all pediatric patients and among patients with keratoconus of all ages was assessed. Patients with pediatric keratoconus were evaluated for keratoconus stage, initial presentation, uncorrected distance visual acuity, corrected distance visual acuity (CDVA), corneal topography, and pachymetry. Patients were classified according to different treatment regimen groups and different follow-up visits were evaluated.

Results: During 5 years, 16,808 patients were examined, of whom 2,972 were 14 years or younger. A total of 541 patients were diagnosed as having keratoconus; of those, 16 were 14 years or younger at the time of diagnosis. Hence, the incidence of keratoconus was 0.53% among pediatric patients and 3.78% among adult patients (>14 years). Initial presentation was during routine checkup (1 of 16) for allergic conjunctivitis (3 of 16), reduced vision (10 of 16), and corneal hydrops (mimicking keratitis) (2 of 16). Except for 2 patients lost to follow-up, all eyes received corneal cross-linking treatment and 16 eyes received additional intracorneal ring segment implantation.

Conclusions: The incidence of pediatric keratoconus indicates that increased awareness for keratoconus among children is needed, mainly in cases of family history of keratoconus, ocular allergy/pruritus, poor CDVA, corneal hydrops, and/or high astigmatism..

Biography

Elias F Jarade, MD. is the director of the Corneal, External Disease, and Refractive Surgery Services at Beirut Eye Specialist Hospital. Dr. Elias is a graduate of Harvard Medical School with 2 certificates of fellowship in cornea and refractive surgery from the Eye Center and Eye Foundation for Research, and The Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Elias is heavily involved in the practice and research of cornea, cataract, refractive surgery for the past 15 years with main interest in keratoconus. Has to his record more than 50 peer reviewed scientific papers and chapters. Also, presenter and invited faculty in the field of cornea and refractive surgery at international meetings. Board member for the "Journal of Refractive Surgery" "International Journal of Ophthalmology", "International Advisory Board for the Saudi Journal of Ophthalmology", Founder-general secretary of the Emirates Cornea and Refractive Surgery (ECRS) club, Guest editor for the "Journal of Ophthalmology".

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