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Infantile blindness: Causes and role of inheritance

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The study is considered to be the first study in Sudan concerned with children who were born blind. It was aimed to find out the main causes of born blindness and the role of inheritance through their families'. The study was done in Khartoum State of Sudan. Any subject who was registered as blind since birth, his visual acuity 3/60 or less and agreed to participate in this study was included. Permission was taken from the leader of the centers of blinds. Verbal consent was obtained before examinations. Personal demographic data, history, visual acuity test and refraction, ocular examinations were taken. A questionnaire was used to assess parents' relationship and history of blindness. A total number of 211 subjects were screened, 120 subjects (56.87%) were suitable. 75.83% males and 24.17% females. Their mean age was 23.15 ± 8.1 years. The causes of born blindness were congenital cataract (28.33%), corneal abnormalities (28.33%), optic nerve defects (27.5%) and retinal abnormalities (5.83%). Structural abnormalities 3.33% and 6.68% of the subjects were without ocular anatomical defects. 75% of the subjects showed positive family history of blindness, 93.33% of the subjects' parents were related (71.66% of the parents were of 1st degree cousins, 10% 2nd degree and 11.67% far relationship). 75% of the subjects families of positive history of blindness and all the subjects of negative family history their parents were related. 75% of childhood blindness was inherited (51.66% autosomal recessive, 9.17% autosomal dominant, 14.17% X-linked, 25% isolated cases).

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