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## Prevalence and causes of childhood blindness and visual impairment in Quranic boarding schools in the Gazira state of Sudan

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**Aim:** This study aimed to determine the prevalence and causes of childhood blindness and visual impairment in Quranic boarding schools children in the Gazira state of Sudan.

**Materials & Methods:** This study designed in two phases; the first phase of the study designed to detect the visual impairment in children, 822 children were screened according to data collection form. In the second phase, the affected children were investigated deeply through inner eye, refraction, cover tests, and direct treatment to determine the prevalence and classification. The sample selected from traditional Quranic boarding schools maseed that schools to teach children Quran, reading, and writing, the students live in maseeds.

**Results:** The findings indicated that the prevalence of childhood visual impairment (6/18 and worse binocularly) with the best correction was 6 (0.7%) in children of traditional Quranic boarding schools in the Gazira State of Sudan. The prevalence of visual impairment among children was associated with the children's age ( $p \leq 0.00$ ). Cataract and corneal opacities were main causes of visual impairment which represented 27.3% for each of them followed by refractive errors 18.2%, optic nerve lesion 13.6%, retinitis pigmentosa 4.5%, glaucoma 4.5%, and squint 4.5%. The study concluded that the most causes of childhood visual impairment in traditional Quranic boarding schools in the Gazira state of Sudan were avoidable.

**Conclusion:** These findings point out the need for urgently developing a comprehensive childhood eye care plan to deliver eye care services to those children, through cooperation between formal, community stakeholders, and non-governmental organization working in the prevention of avoidable childhood blindness.

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