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Pandemic of diabetes and its health consequences (beyond cataract and retinopathy)

In 2014, 422 million people had diabetes worldwide, with a global prevalence of 8.5% in adults over 18 years of age. The prevalence is increasing all over the world, but a more rapid rise is occurring in low- and middle-income countries. While incredible advances in medicine have happened over the past 60 years, tertiary care is not the answer to the diabetes pandemic. In 2017, the United States spent nearly \$3.5 trillion on healthcare. A treatment-based public health system could have ruinous consequences on the economies of developing countries, where one vial of insulin may cost the equivalent of a month's salary. Instead, a balanced, whole population public health approach to diabetes intervention is needed, where public policy, prevention, and tertiary treatment are implemented simultaneously. As a part of that system, ophthalmologists are at the forefront of monitoring and treating diabetes as they are sometimes the first to suspect that a patient is diabetic due to vision changes. This is critical, as the number of young productive patients that will lose their vision because of diabetic complications is predicted to be 10 times greater than the number of older patients affected by cataracts. After a diabetes diagnosis, patients should be counselled regarding beneficial lifestyle modifications, be encouraged to tightly control their glucose levels, and treated promptly and appropriately when diabetic eye complications occur.

Recent Publications

1. Arterburn DE, O'Connor, PJ: A look ahead at the Future of Diabetes Prevention and Treatment: JAMA Dec.19,2012, Vol 308, No 23
2. Finberg, HV: The Paradox of Disease Prevention, Celebrated in Principle, Resisted in Practice: JAMA 2013, Vol 310(1)85-90
3. Gupta R, Moore SE, Eubank SS, Raju VK, Patnaik AK, Challapalli K : Reducing the Burden of Diabetic Complications: Diabetic Retinopathy in West Virginia: WVA Medical Journal, Jan/Feb.2018
4. Hu FB, Satija A, Manson JE: Curbing the Diabetes Pandemic: The Need for Global Policy Solutions JAMA Published online May 21, 2015.
5. Raju VK, Raju LV: Musings on Medicine, Myth and History, India's Legacy, 2017.

Biography

Vadrevu K Raju—MD, FRCS, FACS—is a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, West Virginia University, WV, USA and Founder, President of Eye Foundation of America. He received his Medical Degree from Andhra University, India and Residency and Fellowship in UK. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He received awards from American Academy of Ophthalmology four times for his teaching, research and international services. His most recent awards include Doctor Nathan Davis International Award of Excellence in Medicine by American Medical Association; Lifetime Achievement Award from WV State Medical Association; the President's Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama, Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award for Achievement in Medicine, House of Lords, London. He was included in the Leading Physicians of the World by International Association of Ophthalmologists. Medscape placed him among the best doctors in America.

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