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Ophthalmology practice challenges in low income countries (Eastern Congo specific case)

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Ophthalmology practice in low income countries remains a very big problem up today because of inaccessibility to eye care in most of people. Blindness prevention and V2020 plan applicability in this area is up today a dream while blindness is at his highest level in most of these countries, especially in Democratic republic of the Congo. The aim of our study is to present a five years' experience of ophthalmology practice in eastern Congo, for an advocacy for a real integration of primary eye care into the primary health care system and a support of blindness prevention program in this area. On a total 73,068 patients examination performed in our service these last 5 years, the blindness rate is 1.4 %. The blindness rate is increasing each year because of unoperated cataract (53%), uncorrected refractive errors (14.7%), glaucoma (8%), corneal pathologies, diabetic retinopathy (7.2%), traumatic pathologies (11.1%), in this area where have been made many atrocity and human right violation due to the war which destabilizes this region from 1996 up today. Many factors like the absence of qualified human resources (only 3 ophthalmologists for 8.2 millions) and specialized infrastructures (only 2 in the region), and poverty reinforces the situation. The absence of international partners and NGO involved in the eye health care in this area and non-implication of the government. The national program of blindness prevention is not supported and primary eye care is not integrated in primary health care system. Prevalence of blindness is increasing in low income countries. Urgent action are required to ameliorate the situation such as training of human resources, eye care integration in primary health care system, and amelioration of eye care delivery, with government and NGO accompaniment.

Biography

Theophile Kabesha has completed his PhD at the age of 28 years from Lubumbashi University and postdoctoral studies in ophthalmology from Institute of Tropical Ophthalmology of Africa in Bamako-Mali. He also completed his studies in epidemiology and clinical research from ISPED Bordeaux-France and has been trained in medical retina at Creteil - Paris XII university ophthalmic center (France) under the ICO fellowship program sponsoring. He is the director of Bukavu eye Clinic, a provincial ophthalmologic referral center. He has published more than 10 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as the blindness prevention pioneer in eastern Congo of reputed (1000 cataract surgery a year and 14000 patients performed). He actually is a professor at Bukavu official university school of medicine.

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