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## Prevalence, causes of avoidable blindness, visual impairment and cataract surgical services in rural Bihar, India

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**Background:** There is no recent evidence on the prevalence of blindness and visual impairment (VI) from rural Bihar.

**Aim:** To estimate the prevalence and causes of blindness and cataract surgical services in rural Bihar.

**Subjects:** Individuals aged  $\geq 50$  years were considered for this study.

**Materials & Methods:** We conducted a house-hold survey from January to March 2016 in randomly chosen Siwan district by using validated rapid assessment of avoidable blindness (RAAB) methodology.

**Results:** We enumerated 3476 and examined 3189 individuals (92% response rate). The overall prevalence of blindness, severe visual impairment (VI) and moderate VI was found to be 2.2% (95%CI: 1.6-2.8), 3.4% and 18.3%, respectively. Untreated cataract was the leading cause in all three categories including blindness (73%), severe VI (93%) and moderate VI (79%). Refractive error (71%) was the main cause in mild VI category. Cataract surgical coverage for the district was 78.1%, 79.4% for males and 77% for females. 30.6% eyes had borderline to poor outcome.

**Conclusion:** Untreated cataract continues to remain a major cause of avoidable blindness including both moderate and severe VI. This suggests a huge backlog of cataract cases among the marginalized populations of Bihar. In spite of good coverage, cataract surgical complications are also significant, that means quality needs to be improved. Focused community outreach services targeting the rural regions are required to address the problem.

### Biography

Ajit Kumar Poddar has completed his MBBS and MS in Ophthalmology in the year 1995 and 2002, respectively from Patna University, India. He is a Medical Director of Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital, Bihar, India, which is the largest eye hospital in Eastern India with community eye care being its core strength. He has presented his papers at various state and national level conferences and has a surgical experience of over 100,000 surgeries. He has organized various CME and scientific seminars under his leadership.

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