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Public awareness of common eye diseases in Jordan

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Abstract: Background: Cataract, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and dry eye disease are common with high prevalence in Jordan. This study aims to assess the awareness of these ocular diseases among Jordanian population. Method: A self-designed questionnaire was developed in Arabic and used to interview people in different provinces of Jordan. Socio-demographic data e.g. age, gender and level of education was reported. Public awareness of four ocular diseases; cataract, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy (DR) and dry eye disease (DED) was assessed. Questions about familiarity with the diseases, familiarity with their risk factors and participants' source of knowledge were asked. Moreover, awareness of the effect of these disease on the eye whether they are blinding, preventable, treatable and/or the vision is back to normal following treatment was also assessed Results: A total of 802 participants (232 males and 570 females) completed the questionnaire. The average age (? standard deviation) of the study participants was 28 ? 11.6 (range 18 to 80 years old). Awareness of cataract, glaucoma, DR and DED was reported by 31%, 38%, 37% and 52% of the study population, respectively. Family/relatives/friends and mass media appeared to be the most common sources of knowledge. Age and level of education of the participants were significantly associated with the level of disease awareness. Conclusion: This work shows that the level of awareness of the four ocular diseases among Jordanians is good and compares with many reports in the developed and developing countries. Familiarity and knowledge about ocular diseases is essential as it would increase the chance of the subject being tested and thus diagnosed early enough if any problem occurred. Better understanding of the disease would encourage subjects to seek medical care sooner which in turn would prevent visual impairment. Therefore, awareness campaigns should be made to target unaware population