

Retinopathy among young adult diabetic subjects - preliminary data from the Sri Lanka young diabetes study

Katulanda, P; Mahesh, JG; Wljesinghe, NP; Silva, MAU; Asfir, EL; Sheriff, MHR

Abstract :

Introduction: Diabetes mellitus can lead to sight threatening retinopathy. Blindness can be prevented by early detection and effective intervention.

Objective: To determine the prevalence of retinopathy among young adult diabetic subjects and to investigate the underlying clinical and metabolic risk factors.

Design, setting and methods: Cross sectional descriptive study conducted at the Diabetes research Unit of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo and the Eye Hospital. Diabetes subjects who were diagnosed between 16 to 40 years of age were recruited from government clinics, National Diabetes Centre and from private sector. Detailed clinical and metabolic assessment undertaken and retinal examination performed after papillary dilatation by ophthalmoscopy and bio microscopy. Data analysed using SPSS version 13 package.

Results: Total number of subjects 354, mean age 37 (SD 6), females 72%, and mean diabetes duration 5.5 years (SD 4.47). The gross prevalence of retinopathy was 22%. There was significant association with age, duration of diabetes, HBA 1C level and the presence of microalbuminuria, there was no significant association with sex, fasting blood glucose, blood pressure and the body mass index.

Conclusions and recommendations: More than one in five diabetic in this young onset cohort was found to have retinopathy. It has the potential to become an important cause of adult blindness in Sri Lanka. Urgent measures are needed both to control the diabetes epidemic and to prevent blindness among diabetes subjects.