

Population: 209.5 million (2016)

Percentage of older people: 8% over the age of 65 years old, which is expected to rise to 25% by 2050

Diabetes: 14.3 million people living with the condition with an estimated 5.76 million undiagnosed cases

The DR Barometer, a ground-breaking global study, has highlighted the urgent need to prevent unnecessary vision loss caused by diabetic retinopathy. To help facilitate regional and country-level actions on this issue, the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) hosted the Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) Barometer Latin American Advocacy Workshop on 6-7 April, 2018 in Mexico City, Mexico in partnership with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and Bayer.

The workshop brought together 46 delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico across many disciplines (patients, ophthalmologists, diabetes specialists, primary care providers, diabetes educators, governments, and industry) to work together to determine solutions for improving care pathways that lead to improved vision health outcomes for adult with diabetes in the region.

This “Viewpoint” outlines the country-specific strategies developed by the Brazilian working group to improve patient outcomes at a local level.

Overall goal:

To reduce gaps in awareness, diagnosis, treatment and adherence to treatment for diabetic retinopathy (DR) and diabetic macular edema (DME), with the adoption of effective public policies.

Barriers that need to be addressed:

1. Lack of reliable epidemiological data to inform planning for screening and treatment
2. Gaps in awareness of diabetic eye diseases among the public as well as clinicians
3. Lack of implementation of public policies to improve care pathways for people with diabetes

Key stakeholders of the working group:

Collaboration through a common strategic direction of all interdisciplinary stakeholders is essential to address barriers toward effective management of DR. In Brazil, these include:

- Advocacy organizations for vision health, diabetes, and ageing (Retina Brazil, Associação de Diabetes Juvenil, ILC Brazil)
- Interdisciplinary medical associations (Sociedade Brasileira De Retina e Vítreo, Sociedade Brasileira de Diabetes, and Sociedade Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia); and
- Pharmaceutical Industry (Bayer)

Objectives and future actions of the working group:

Working Group: Establish a working group with all stakeholders and regions of Brazil represented

Epidemiological Assessment: Expand on the findings of the DR Barometer study with local information to inform actions of government and other stakeholders, including the current coverage of health services and professionals for prevention, screening, and treatment.

Telemedicine: Expand the existing telemedicine system to ensure all people with diabetes have access to regular screening and treatment for diabetic retinopathy.

Education: Implement a course for medical professionals on diabetic retinopathy.

Next steps:

1. Convene a working group meeting in July/August 2018 to confirm roles and responsibilities
2. Identify key people and institutions to expand national working group
3. Develop a plan for the method and scope of the epidemiological assessment
4. Contact manager of the existing telemedicine system to discuss strategies for expansion
5. Develop training materials on diabetic retinopathy for medical education

Resources

The working group has the necessary networks to enlist other stakeholders. It was identified that a dedicated individual with funding should carry out the management of this initiative.

To learn more or join the DR Barometer Brazilian Working Group, contact:

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Go to www.drbarometer.com to join the DR Barometer Community today.