

Population: 48.8 million (2016)

Percentage of older people: 12% over the age of 60 years old, which is expected to rise to 34% by 2050

Diabetes: 3 million people living with the condition with an estimated 1.2 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 AG.

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 from Colombian working group to improve patient outcomes at a local level.

Objectives:

- Develop a coalition to advocate and propose national plans to make available and accessible comprehensive diabetes management including diabetic retinopathy (DR) and diabetic macular edema (DME) which incorporates a life course perspective (within the next 6 months).
- Develop a comprehensive education program for the general public and training programs for health care providers (no later than February 2019).

Barriers that need to be addressed:

1. Inadequate diabetes management among patients due to differences in primary care access, education, and motivation
2. Lack of diagnosis due to doctor-to-patient ratios
3. Unequal access to treatment due to financial barriers

Key stakeholders of the working group:

Collaboration through a common strategic direction of all interdisciplinary stakeholders (patients, ophthalmologists, diabetes specialists, primary care providers, diabetes educators, governments, and industry) is essential to address barriers toward effective management of DR. Institutional agencies include:

- People with diabetes (Asociación Colombiana de Diabetes)
- Doctors (National Ophthalmological Foundation, Asociación Colombiana de Retina y Vítreo, Federación Diabetológica Colombiana)
- Pharmaceutical Industry (Bayer)
- PAHO Country Office
- Ministry of Health

Future actions of the working group:

Epidemiological committee: Create the data collection tool and raise awareness of the importance of epidemiological data.

National Coalition: Convene a meeting with the leaders of the stakeholder groups to establish a national coalition with legal status.

General population: Develop and implement an awareness campaign about DR for Diabetes Week.

Patient education:

- Help establish an association for people living with DR.
- Develop educational materials about DR for people with diabetes.

Doctors: Develop clinical practice guidelines for diabetes and DR Medical education program at different levels for comprehensive treatment at different levels

Next steps:

National Coalition and Epidemiological Subcommittee

- **May – June:** Design and elaborate the project for the creation of the coalition
- **July:** Convene a meeting with the leaders of the coalition's stakeholders
- **August:** Establish the statutes and legal entity of the coalition
- **September:** Create the epidemiological subcommittee and identify unmet project needs
- **October – December:** Establish and formalize the objectives of the epidemiological committee and develop a data collection tool to assess extent of diabetes and DR in Colombia

Public Awareness Campaign

- **October – July:** Development of messaging for a campaign during Diabetes Week; Create the campaign icon and campaign brief and agency choice; and Campaign implementation.

Resources

The following resources were identified as important for the success of the initiative:

- Electronic media
- Face to face meetings
- Human resources and availability
- Financial Support
- Electronic platform
- Ministry of Health
- Advertising agency

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

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