

Chile

Population: 18.1 million (2016)

Percentage of older people: 11% over the age of 65 years old, which is expected to rise to 26% by 2050

Diabetes: 1.4 million people living with the condition with an estimated 470,800 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 Chilean working group to improve patient outcomes at a local level.

Goal:

To achieve better results for people with diabetic retinopathy (DR) and diabetic macular edema (DME) through enhanced screening and optimizing access to treatments.

Barriers that need to be addressed:

1. Inequalities and inconsistencies in education of patients and primary care practitioners regarding DR and DME
2. Low incentives for utilizing telemedicine for screening
3. Inadequate public health financing for access to treatments

Key actors 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.

In Chile, this includes:

- the Sociedad Chilena De Oftalmología
- the Chilean Public Health Authority and Acceso Universal con Garantías Explícitas (AUGE)

Objectives and future actions of the working group:

Financing: Demonstrate cost effectiveness and cost-benefit of screening and treatment of DR and DME to national public health authority

The Ministry of Health has already started a national screening program for diabetic retinopathy and is actively seeking to increase coverage in such a way that the cost benefit and cost effectiveness of screening is well known and documented by its evidence based medicine department.

Coordination: Develop an advisory committee within the Chilean Ophthalmology Society

The AUGE consults experts opinion from outside the health ministry, in the first place to the Ophthalmology Society. New screening processes are been studied for the up to date AUGE 2019-2022. This year there was a meeting with the health minister with whom the topic of diabetic retinopathy was discussed.

Education: Implement patient education workshops and a course on diabetes management including DR and DME for primary care practitioners

Next steps:

1. Conduct analyses of cost effectiveness and cost-benefit for further expansion of screening and treatment programs including telemedicine.

The screening in Chile is based on telemedicine. There are ~120 ophthalmological primary care centers in the public health sector that have fundus cameras, trained personnel and are actively being used. The coverage of eye fundus is permanently monitored.

2. Prepare for education workshops by collecting existing resources for patients and physicians and developing additional materials

This year the Chilean Society of Ophthalmology has been working with the Ministry of Health in the creation of a manual of ophthalmological care for the general practitioner of primary care, which includes recommendations for the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of diabetic retinopathy.

Resources

- The Chile working group has the capabilities to gather epidemiological evidence from international public health authorities including cost effectiveness of screening and treatment.
- The Chilean government along with several health service organizations convene workshops for primary care physicians with help of members of the Chilean Society of Ophthalmology.

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

Dr. Rodrigo Vidal
Head of the Ophthalmology Service
Hospital Clínico Universidad de Chile.
rodrigovidalsobarzo@gmail.com

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