

EYE AND VISION

August 21-23, 2017 | Toronto, Canada

Causes of childhood blindness at National Eye Centre Kaduna, Nigeria from January 2011 to December 2015

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Objectives: The objective of this study is to determine the causes of blindness among children (aged 0-18 years) seen at National Eye Centre, Kaduna from January 2011-December 2015.

Methods: The study involved review of case files of 2145 records of children aged 0-18 years who visited National Eye Centre, Kaduna from January 2011-December 2015. Those diagnosed based on WHO criteria for blindness as been blind were identified and causes of blindness among them were categorized according to gender, age and laterality, preventable, treatable and avoidable causes of blindness. Frequencies and descriptive tables were generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Chi squared test, student's t-test were used to compare means and values were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results: A total of 2145 children case files were reviewed, 789 (36.8%) children had childhood blindness. The major causes of childhood blindness were cataract (52.6%), retinal disorders (14.1%), glaucoma (10.3%), corneal opacity (5.7%), refractive error (5.6%) and others (11.8%). 19.5% were visually impaired, 14.5% were totally blind (NLP) and 5% had low vision/reduced vision in at least one eye. Childhood

blindness was more prevalent among children aged 5 to 12 years (38.1%) and birth to 1 year (20.7%). There was statistically significant difference in gender males (57.4%) and females (42.3%). 58.2% of the causes of blindness found in the study are treatable, 16.0% are preventable while 25.8% are avoidable.

Conclusion: Blindness is a serious public health problem in the northern part of Nigeria, and there is urgent need to implement comprehensive childhood blindness prevention programs. Further surveys are essential to confirm these findings and determine the causes of childhood blindness in other parts of Nigeria to achieve VISION 2020 objectives.

Speaker Biography

Ezinne Ngozika Esther is a Nigerian. She studied optometry at Abia State University Uturu Nigeria and obtained the Doctor of Optometry Degree in 2006. She is very Passionate about Optometry Profession and has worked with Orbis International and Brien Holden vision Institute. She is interested in Pediatric optometry and Low vision. She has worked as a lecturer at the University of Gondar Ethiopia, Mzuzu University Malawi and Madonna University Nigeria. Currently, she is a postgraduate student of University of Kwa Zulu -Natal Durban South Africa. She has eight Research Publications, has 5 siblings and likes reading, watching television and listening to music.

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