



India on the brink of a dry eye disease epidemic, says study

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Age, urban residence, occupation and socio-economic affluence among risk factors

- For the first time, a large-scale, hospital-based study in India involving over 14.5 lakh patients had found the incidence (number of new cases occurring each year) of dry eye disease to be 21,000 (1.46%).
- At over 12,500 cases, the incidence in urban areas was higher than in rural areas (over 8,700 cases).
- With a large ageing population, growing middle-class and chronic nature of the disease, India is on the verge of a dry eye disease epidemic, says the study.
- The prevalence of dry eye disease will be about 40% of the urban population by 2030.
- Since the disease tends to be progressive with age, once corneal damage becomes irreversible it can lead to visual impairment and even blindness.
- Early diagnosis and treatment is therefore important.
- The disease is hugely underdiagnosed in India.
- The study was undertaken across 200 locations in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Karnataka between 2010 and 2018.
- The study found the onset of dry eye disease is early in men than in women.

Low tear production

- Age, urban residence, occupation and socio-economic affluence were found to be high risk factors for developing the disease.
- Dry eye disease could occur due to inadequate tear production (aqueous deficient), tear film instability due to evaporation or mixed type.



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