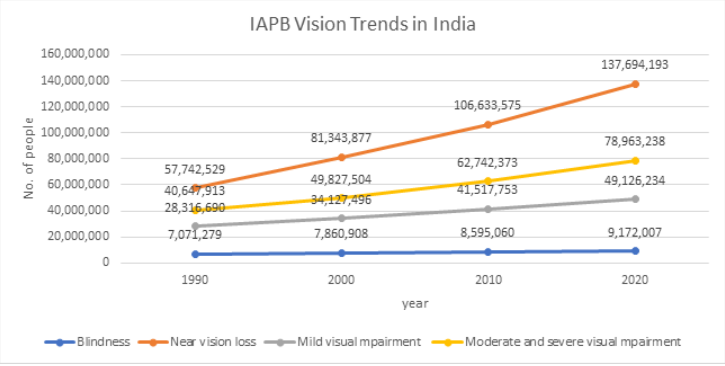
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Cases of moderate, severe visual impairment doubles in India

08 October 2020 | News

More than 92.9% cases of blindness in Indians, over 50 years, can be prevented



World Sight Day is observed each year on 8 Oct to focus attention on vision impairment and blindness. New data from the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) indicates that in India cases of moderate and severe visual

impairment have almost doubled from 40.6 million in 1990 to 79 million in 2020 and cases of near vision loss have more than doubled from 57.7 million to 137.6 million during the same time period.

According to the National Blindness & Visual Impairment Survey1 2015-2019, about 92.9% of cases of blindness amongst people over the age of 50 years can be avoided in India. This stresses the need for regular check-ups and early detection of vision-impairing conditions especially amongst the vulnerable like young school-going children, women, the elderly with diabetes and people with family history of glaucoma.

Speaking on World Sight Day, Suresh Pattathil, Managing Director, Allergan India Pvt. Ltd, said, “Vision loss effects both the health and wellbeing of a person. 75% of vision loss can be cured or prevented. According to several ophthalmologists, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to patients skipping their regular eye check-up, this has led to a worsening of vision impairment in some cases. On this World Sight Day, we urge everyone to ‘prevent the preventable’ and protect their eyesight. Consider an eye check-up as important as a body check-up, especially if you knowingly or unknowingly have a condition that could lead to vision loss.”

Peter Holland, CEO, IAPB said: "Our world is facing unprecedented challenges this year, but the demand for eye health does not stop. World Sight Day offers us a time to celebrate the promise and hope in sight. New data is showing us the magnitude of eye care need; we must work together to ensure eye health is available to all who need it."

Earlier this year, Allergan, the IAPB and international NGO Sightsavers launched the “Keep Sight” initiative to create awareness and screen people for glaucoma in Ganjam district in Odisha. This is a community-based glaucoma screening program to identify glaucoma-related vision loss amongst people in the community. The program also trains healthcare professionals to screen people at a high risk and provide the necessary treatment and eye care. So far, over 13,500 people have been screened for glaucoma and more than 1273 referred to a hospital for treatment.