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New national guidelines on prevention and management of Diabetic Retinopathy

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A significant step toward strengthening Indiaâ??s response to diabetes-related vision loss



VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India announced a comprehensive two-stage programme culminating in the National Summit on Diabetic Retinopathy, observed on World Diabetes Day (14 November). The key highlight of the summit was to launch the updated, comprehensive guidelines on Management of Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) in India, supported by Roche Products (India), and foster a nationwide effort to combat diabetes-related vision loss, a rapidly escalating public health challenge in India.

In India, epidemiological data show that DR affects approximately 18% of urban and 10.4% of rural populations with diabetes meaning nearly one in five urban diabetics is at risk of vision impairment. While early detection and timely intervention can prevent blindness in most cases, awareness levels remain low, not only among patients but also among some healthcare practitioners.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rajesh Saini, President, VISION 2020, India, said, “Diabetic Retinopathy is a growing public health concern, silently threatening the vision of millions. These new guidelines rooted in expert consensus and enriched with the latest diagnostic and management protocols—will empower healthcare providers to detect and intervene earlier, especially in underserved communities. By updating our 2015 DR Manual and aligning it with current best practices, we aim to drive nationwide awareness, strengthen clinical capacity, and reinforce the message that vision loss from diabetes is preventable with timely action.”

The event focused on policy integration strategies to promote early screening and timely intervention for diabetic retinopathy (DR), a leading cause of preventable vision loss among working-age adults. The discussions reflected the incorporation of advanced global standards and technological innovations in screening and treatment, aimed at enhancing early detection and management practices nationwide. This renewed focus underscores a commitment to patient-centric care and collaborative action in addressing the growing burden of diabetes-related eye diseases. Experts at the event emphasized the importance of early diagnosis, timely treatment, and multi-sector partnerships to achieve long-term improvements in eye health outcomes.