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Diabetic retinopathy prevention for all: Introduction of a novel diabetic retinopathy screening programme to improve access to preventive services in populations of medically underserved areas in Central Greece-Our experience so far

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Establishing an annual diabetic retinopathy screening programme in a local rural community of Central Greece to improve compliance with diabetic retinopathy screening guidelines. Diabetic retinopathy is a major complication of poorly controlled glucose and constitutes the most common cause of vision loss among people with diabetes and a significant cause of blindness worldwide. Moreover, it represents a diagnostic challenge for the clinician in terms of appropriate classification and early detection, factors that can potentially impact on available treatment options. The goal of our scientific team was to establish an annual screening programme for diabetic patients of medically underserved areas to increase access to relevant services and educate patients about the adverse ophthalmological complications of their disease. During the time period between January and June 2016, we have examined 252 patients with diabetes mellitus. We have used a standardized form to obtain medical history in addition to a questionnaire specific to quality aspects of screening for diabetes mellitus complications. The funduscopy was performed with the use of a slit lamp together with a Volk Digital Wide Field lens. The outcomes of our project include provision of care to patients without prior clinical evaluation or information in relevance to diabetic retinopathy in addition to timely referral of appropriate cases for further diagnostic evaluation and specialised treatment. The chronic nature of the disease and the special needs of certain populations with limited access to healthcare services mandate appropriate action to increase awareness and promote equal opportunities to effective diabetes mellitus monitoring and prevention.

Biography

Mitsios A is a GMC registered Physician. He has completed his MBBS degree from the Medical School of University of Thessaly in Greece. Currently, he serves as a community Doctor in the Medical Center of Farkadona in Central Greece and intends to specialise in Ophthalmology in the United Kingdom. He is particularly interested in Programmes of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and is currently leading a Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme to increase patient awareness and education in relevant conditions.

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