

Infrastructure, human resource and knowledge on retinopathy of prematurity among care takers providing pediatric services in referral hospitals in Dar es salaam

Joshua Youze

Ophthalmology Senior Resident, Tanzania

Background: Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is a vaso-proliferative disease of the retina that occurs mainly in premature babies with low birth weight, mainly associated with excessive oxygen use. Advanced neonatal services with ineffective ROP screening have led to an increased incidence of ROP in middle and low-income countries as compared to developed countries. Infrastructure, human resource and knowledge about ROP among Pediatric care takers play an important role in preventing blindness related to ROP.

Methodology: This was a hospital based descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in five referral hospitals, which have neonatal units in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania, from July to December 2020. One hundred eighty participants working in Pediatric department were recruited from these hospitals. Quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire, and an observational checklist was used to check for the availability of screening equipment. Data was entered into and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS) version 20.

Results: Of the 180 health workers, 66 (36.7%) males and 114 (63.3%) females. More than half 94 (52.2%) of participants had average knowledge, 59 (32.8%) had good knowledge and a small proportion 27 (15.0%) had poor knowledge about ROP. Only two hospitals had indirect ophthalmoscopes which were in good working conditions. There were 17 ophthalmologists in total, with one hospital (MNH) having 11 (64.7%) of all the ophthalmologists.

Conclusion: Majority of the paediatricians, pediatric residents and medical officers had good knowledge about retinopathy of prematurity screening than nurses. Only one hospital has required infrastructures for screening. Significant unequal distribution of ophthalmologists among referral hospitals can hinder the screening program.

Recommendation: Updated trainings on ROP should be given on regular basis and nurses should be given a priority. Ophthalmologists should be equally distributed to all the referral hospitals in the region considering the equipment's are supplied as well.

Received: September 31, 2021; **Accepted:** October 02, 2021; **Published:** March 07, 2022