

ANALYTICAL STUDY ON EPIDEMIOLOGY OF PTERYGIUM IN A TERTIARY CARE CENTRE

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Pterygium is a common chronic ophthalmic disease in our country which amounts to a significant visual morbidity. It may be affected by many factors such as age, gender, ultraviolet radiation exposure, dry eyes and time spent outdoors.

AIM

To study and analyze the epidemiology of pterygium including risk factors and specific associations in tertiary care centre

METHODOLOGY

A hospital based cross sectional observational study of 104 patients with pterygium attending the outpatient department from June 2016 to May 2017 was performed. A detailed history with socio demographic characteristics and complete ocular examination was done with the help of a structured questionnaire. The characteristics of pterygium with respect to type and stage were correlated with the socio demographic and clinical data of the patients including nature of occupation, amount of sun exposure, comorbid conditions and dry eyes.

RESULTS

Majority of the patients in our study were in the age group 45 to 55 years with a female predominance. The years of sun exposure and cumulative hours of sun exposure were significantly higher in the fleshy type of pterygium ($p < 0.05$). No significant association was found between high altitude, diabetes and hypertension with pterygium. 19 patients had dry eye, most of whom were clinically asymptomatic. Most common clinical symptoms include irritation and foreign body sensation in eye, visual disturbances, redness and visible growth in eye. With the rule astigmatism was more commonly associated with pterygium.

CONCLUSION

Prolonged sunlight and UV light exposure is a known risk factor in development of pterygium. Patient working outdoors should be counseled about the importance of wearing protective eye gears to delay the onset and the progression of pterygium to some extent. Adequate management of asymptomatic dry eye is mandatory especially in patients working outdoors, as it can play a contributory role and hence the importance of dry eye evaluation in all cases of pterygium. As pterygium is usually a bilateral disease and the development of one eye always precedes the other, educating the patient can delay the progression in the affected eye and also to reduce the risk of pterygium developing in the other eye to some extent.

KEY WORDS

Pterygium, dry eye, sunlight, ultraviolet rays, altitude