Press Release

Timely detection of amblyopia in children increases chances of successful treatment

Eye health in both children and adults should not be ignored

New Delhi, 10th October 2017: The prevalence of amblyopia or lazy eye is about 2% to 12% in various parts of India, according to statistics. Studies also indicate that amblyopia is one of the leading causes of visual impairment in children globally.[1]

Amblyopia, also known as lazy eye, is a condition that begins during infancy and early childhood. While it affects only one eye in most of the cases, both eyes can be affected, in some cases. It is a vision development disorder in which one eye fails to achieve normal visual acuity, even with prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. The brain favors one eye and ignores the image from the affected eye, due to poor vision, which becomes weaker in due course of time, leading to amblyopia.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, “Amblyopia starts with one eye having better focus than the other. Sometimes, one eye may have significant farsightedness or astigmatism, but the other doesn’t. When a child’s brain receives both a blurry image as well as a clear one, the brain starts ignoring the blurry one. If this is not detected in time and goes on for some months or years in a young child, the vision in the blurry eye worsens. Sometimes a child’s eyes do not align with each other, the eyes may turn in or out while looking at an object. This is called strabismus, and it can lead to amblyopia eventually. Children with this condition cannot focus their eyes together on an image and often see double. It is important that all children be screened for amblyopia before they get to the school age.”

Some symptoms of this condition include blurred and/or double vision, poor depth perception (of vision), eyes not appearing to work together, and an eye turn (upward, downward, outward, or inward).

Some complications of this condition, if left undetected, included blindness, eye turn, and central vision.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “The younger the child, the more effective is the treatment for this condition. The likelihood of vision improvement reduces once the child crosses the age of 8.
Two approaches to treating lazy eye include treating an underlying eye problem and getting the affected eye to work so that normal vision can develop.”

Here are some general tips for good eye health that one can follow.

- Get examined for diabetes and high blood pressure. If left undetected, these diseases can lead to eye problems such as diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, and eye strokes (blockage in the blood vessels in the retina).
- Look for any changes in your vision. If you notice any warning signs, contact your doctor immediately.
- Get plenty of physical activity. If your work involves a lot of screen time, make sure to take breaks frequently and do some eye exercises. It is also a good idea to wash your eyes with some cold water.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet. Antioxidants in fruits and dark green leafy vegetables can possibly reduce the risk of cataracts. Omega-3-fatty acids are also beneficial for eyes.
- Get your eyes checked at least every two years. A comprehensive eye exam, including dilating your pupils, can determine your risk for major eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, which has no early warning signs or symptoms.
- Quit smoking. The many dangers of smoking have been well documented. When it comes to eye health, people who smoke are at greater risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, uveitis and other eye problems.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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