Regular eye checkup essential for all patients with diabetes

New Delhi, October 18, 2016: Diabetic retinopathy is the major cause of blindness in patients with diabetes mellitus. But, it is largely a preventable or avoidable cause of blindness. Poor glycemic control, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels increase the risk of developing diabetic retinopathy.

"In most patients, diabetic retinopathy, to begin with, is usually asymptomatic or may cause only very mild symptoms. Hence, many people with diabetes remain unaware until the disease is at a very advanced stage when it is too late for treatment. Vision that has been lost cannot be restored. Hence, regular screening of patients with diabetes to detect retinopathy and early intervention is very important to prevent visual impairment and blindness", said Padma Shri Awardee Dr KK Aggarwal - President Elect IMA & President Heart Care Foundation of India.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) 2016 Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes recommend optimal glycemic control including blood pressure and serum lipid control to reduce the risk or slow the progression of diabetic retinopathy. For screening, the ADA recommends as follows:

- “Patients with type 1 diabetes should have an initial dilated and comprehensive eye examination within 5 years after the diagnosis of diabetes.

- Patients with type 2 diabetes should have an initial dilated and comprehensive eye examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist at the time of the diabetes diagnosis as they may have had years of undiagnosed diabetes.

- If there is no evidence of retinopathy for one or more annual eye exams, then exams every 2 years may be considered. If any level of diabetic retinopathy is present, subsequent dilated retinal examinations for patients with type 1 or type 2 diabetes should be repeated at least annually by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. If retinopathy is progressing or sight-threatening, then examinations will be required more frequently.”

Diabetic retinopathy is included in the list of eye diseases that can be prevented and treated if detected early under ‘VISION 2020: The Right to Sight’ global joint initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). The initiative aims to “Intensify and accelerate prevention of blindness activities so as to achieve the goal of eliminating avoidable blindness by 2020.”
About Heart Care Foundation of India

Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

For more information, please contact

Heart Care Foundation of India

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