



## EYE DONATION CAMPAIGN –WHERE DO WE STAND !

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**ABSTRACT**

Corneal blindness is a major public health problem. Traditionally, barriers to increased corneal transplantation have been daunting, with limited tissue availability and lack of trained corneal surgeons making widespread keratoplasty services cost prohibitive and logistically unfeasible. The ascendancy of cataract surgical rates and more robust eye care infrastructure of several Asian and African countries now provide a solid base from which to dramatically expand corneal transplantation rates. However despite sincere efforts by nationalised eye banks at present in India around 45,000 to 50,000 corneas are collected each year while the requirement of cornea today is 12 million. To achieve this target, intensive education and motivation among the general public for eye donation is required. In this paper we have discussed the various efforts made by our institution to fight against corneal blindness.

**KEYWORDS** : eye donation, keratoplasty, awareness programmes

**Introduction-**

Corneal blindness is persisting and escalating in the country, due to lack of awareness among the general public in India. There are approximately 12 million blind and of these three million are due to corneal disorders 1,2. On an average the country needs 200,000 corneas in a year and as against it only 20,000 are collected. Out of the 20,000 corneas collected only 47% are utilized for sight restoration as the other 53% are of too poor a quality to use in transplantations. In India, the challenge is to not only create eye donation awareness but to also dispel myths and misconceptions associated with it. Department of Ophthalmology, M .G. M .medical college ,& M.Y.Group of Hospital, Indore has also been organizing a series of programmes to combat problem of corneal blindness . In this paper we have discussed the various efforts made by our institution to fight against corneal blindness

**Material And Methods –**

This is a retrospective study to analyse the outcome of various initiatives undertaken by our institute in field of eradication of corneal blindness between Jan 2004 – July 2007.

The aim of the various steps taken in this direction was to -

- Sensitize people to the plight of corneal blind person
- Spread awareness that each person is empowered to make a corneal donation
- Motivate decision makers to make a donation in the event of a death in the family
- Spread information regarding how and where to make an eye donation

The various modes used to spread awareness were-

- Public lectures by Consultants & RSO 's of our department at schools, colleges, associations, trade unions, bus stand and railway station.
- Display of banners & posters at prominent places
- Conduction of quiz and slogan competition for under graduate and post graduate medical students
- Lecture on eye donation for nursing staff
- Painting & slogan competition on eye donation at various schools
- Counselling by counsellor of our mobile unit in hospital wards to explain to patients and their relatives about eye donation.
- Organizing exhibitions on eye donation at various trade fairs
- Celebrating national fortnight for eye donation and corneal blindness.
- Felicitation of family members of donor

The lectures covered following points-

- Who can donate
- When to donate eyes,
- How to become a pledged eye donor,
- How this pledge can be translated into actual eye donation,
- The importance of discussing the issue with family members and
- Importance of discussion after pledging and signing a donor card for eye donation.

- Timing of procedure and that procedure is simple and causes no disfigurement.

The various schools and colleges where lectures on eye donation have been organized by our institute are-

- Sharda girls higher secondary school
- Govt.hindi boys school no.16,21,47, 49,51
- Manav bharti high school
- St.pauls hijger secondary school
- St.raffels higher secondary school and many other

The various newspapers which covered the message of eye donation are –

- Danik bhaskar
- Hindustan times
- Swadesh
- Deenik jagran
- Nav bharat
- Mahanagar
- Meghdoot (magazine)
- Nai duniya and many other

**Results –**

Details	2004	2005	2006	Upto july 2007
Schools & colleges	16	25	29	24
Total awareness programmes	37	55	63	48
Total pledges filled	1823	1962	2226	1753
Total eyes collected	27	59	78	54
Utilised for keratoplasty	19	43	58	27
No. Of limbal stem cell transplant done	4	2	6	4
Sent to other banks	2	1	-	-
Utilised for study purposes	4	15	29	15
Unfit for use	2	-	11	4

**Discussion –**

Eye banking in Indore is in budding stage. Awareness regarding eye donation has gained momentum only during the last decade. Our data reveal that public awareness programmes, number of pledge forms filled and number keratoplasties have increased since 2004. On an average 52 corneas are procured every year at our institute. Our efforts with electronic media and focused campaigns, along with conferences & felicitation of eye donor families though have increased the number of keratoplasties at our institute but still there is a waiting list of patients needing cornea .

**Conclusion**

Though our institute has made sincere efforts in identifying and

tactfully removing the barriers to eye donation ,much more is needed in form of

- Hospital corneal retrieval programme
- Grief counselling
- Cooperation from police personnel
- "required request" provision

We have started our journey in correct direction and hope that near future there will be no waiting list of patients needing cornea. Though our effort is just like a drop in an ocean, but it must not be forgotten that drop by drop fills an ocean.

#### **References**

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