



Clinical Characteristics of Patients with Glaucoma Presenting to Bharatpur Eye Hospital: An Observational Study - Are We Doing Enough?

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ABSTRACT

Key words: Awareness, Glaucoma, Glaucoma suspects.

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It was with great interest that I read the original article “**Clinical characteristics of patients with glaucoma presenting to Bharatpur Eye Hospital- An observational study**”. I would like to congratulate **Sah et al (2022)** for this articulate piece highlighting the clinical characteristics of patients with glaucoma at a tertiary eye care center. It made me ponder on my experience with glaucoma at my facility. Here, I have shared a few of the characteristics of patients visiting our facility and their demographics.

Rapti Academy of Health Sciences (RAHS) is an academic cum health service institution upgraded from Rapti Sub-regional Hospital in

2074 BS (2017 AD). It is a tertiary-level hospital with 300 beds and is located in Ghorahi City, Dang. As an ophthalmologist in the department, have encountered several glaucoma and glaucoma suspect patients in the past four months of my service here. The primary aim is to disseminate the scenario in a tertiary-level government facility.

The study by Sah et al (2022) was a 6-week study with a total of 127 glaucoma patients which excludes glaucoma suspects. As a department that lacks services in the visual field and glaucoma specialists, it would not be inappropriate to include glaucoma suspects to

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assess the glaucoma burden in our department.

Our everyday OPD patient census reaches 80-90 with monthly census averaging 1537.67 patients per month (excluding recent OPD load due to viral conjunctivitis). The following Table 1 demonstrates the total number of OPD patients in the last four months and the number of glaucoma patients.

Sah et al (2022) demonstrated a maximum number of glaucoma patients in the age group 60-69 followed by 70-79 which is reversed in our observation with maximum patients in the 70-79 age group followed by 60-69.

Similarly, the gender distribution is also reversed in our observation with a sex ratio of 82.98.

Table 1: Distribution of patients in OPD according to month of presentation

Month	Total patients	Glaucoma patients n (%)
Baisakh	1367	23 (1.68)
Jestha	1769	24 (1.36)
Asar	1477	31(2.10)
Shrawan	3654	8 (0.22)
Total	8267	86 (1.04)

Table 2: Distribution of glaucoma patients in OPD according to age group (years)

Age group (yrs)	Baisakh	Jestha	Asar	Shrawan	Total n (%)
0-19	4	4	2	-	10 (11.63)
20-29	1	1	3	-	5 (5.81)
30-39	5	2	1	3	11 (12.79)
40-49	3	5	4	-	12 (13.96)
50-59	3	2	4	2	11 (12.79)
60-69	4	6	5	-	15 (17.44)
70-79	3	3	8	3	17 (19.77)
80-89	-	1	4	-	5 (5.81)
Total	23 (26.74)	24 (27.90)	31 (36.05)	8 (9.31)	86 (100)

Table 3: Distribution of glaucoma patients in OPD according to gender

Month	Male n(%)	Female n(%)
Baisakh	9 (39.13)	14 (60.87)
Jestha	15 (62.50)	9 (37.50)
Asar	10 (32.26)	21 (67.74)
Shrawan	5 (62.50)	3 (37.50)
Total	39 (45.35)	47 (54.65)

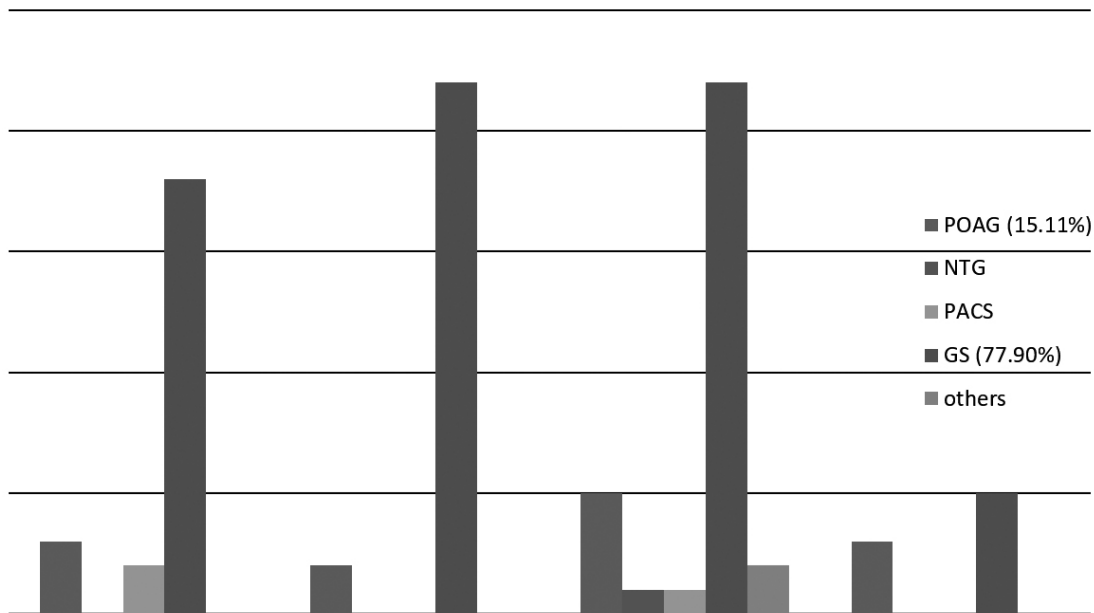


Figure 1: Distribution of types of glaucoma in OPD according to the month of presentation

Also, the types of glaucoma studied here include glaucoma suspects (77.90%) with maximal patients in the same category. Other categories include lens-induced glaucoma.

Sah et al (2022) aimed to study the characteristics and types of glaucoma, presenting symptoms of glaucoma, and secondarily to estimate the number of new cases. Here, only a few demographics and types of glaucoma patients have been evaluated. The discrepancies in results could be because of the huge number of suspects and less diagnosed glaucoma cases. Any diagnostic modality for confirming the presence or absence of glaucoma is not available and hence mandates referral.

Sah et al (2022) also discusses the lack of awareness among the patients presenting with glaucoma which was of particular interest to me. The study mentions a huge number of

patients presenting with poor vision 75.60%. To assess the awareness among our OPD patients, we asked them verbally about their knowledge on glaucoma. No questionnaire was prepared. When our glaucoma suspects and diagnosed cases were asked verbally about glaucoma and family history of glaucoma, most were unaware of the condition. For most patients, good vision means the absence of visual ailment. Glaucoma, infamous as a “silent thief of sight”, can cause damage to the optic nerve without any noticeable symptoms until it’s too late.

According to a population-based study by Thapa et al (2011), the awareness of glaucoma is 2.3% in the general population and is significantly lower in females. As per Sahu et al (2021), the awareness of glaucoma among the participants was poor, more so in the rural cohort (15%) than the urban cohort (25%) in a Siraha district-based study.



Even at a tertiary care government facility, the patients are not aware. This scenario can be alleviated by upgrading existing facilities, mobilizing experts in the field, installing diagnostic and therapeutic equipment, and

creating mass awareness among people via media and activities involving people's participation.



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