

SCENARIO OF BLINDNESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR BLINDNESS CONTROL POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents estimates of the prevalence of visual impairment and its causes, based on the best available evidence derived from recent studies. Estimates were determined from data on low vision and blindness. The burden of visual impairment is not distributed uniformly throughout the world: the least developed regions carry the largest share. Visual impairment is also unequally distributed across age groups, being largely confined to adults 50 years of age and older. A distribution imbalance is also found with regard to gender throughout the world: females have a significantly higher risk of having visual impairment than males. Notwithstanding the progress in surgical intervention that has been made in many countries over the last few decades, cataract remains the leading cause of visual impairment in all regions of the world, except in the most developed countries. Other major causes of visual impairment are, in order of importance, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and trachoma.

KEYWORDS: Visual Impairment, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, Trachoma, Age- Related Macular Degeneration