

Diabetic Retinopathy - a Challenge to Primary Health Care

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In cohort studies diabetic retinopathy (DR) is prevented and treated effectively. However, in clinical practice it is a leading cause of visual impairment and one primary endpoint of suboptimal quality of diabetes treatment. Type 2 diabetes (T2D) is the most common type of diabetes. It occurs mainly after the age of 40 years and is mainly related to obesity. About 8% of Europe's population has diabetes. With aging society, the number of patients with diabetes is expected to increase. Effective primary prevention, as designed by the IMAGE-project, is the key to reducing T2D epidemic. Progression of diabetes endpoints like DR is slowed by strict control of HbA1c, hypertension and hypercholesterolaemia by life-style changes and medication. Digital retinal photography is the evidence-based method for DR screening and follow-up. Structured primary health care of T2D patients with adequate resources has been shown to be a successful and money saving intervention in several countries and health care systems.