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The final visual outcomes following cataract surgery at outreach camps in rural area in Timor-Leste

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Backgrounds: Timor-Leste is a newly formed country which got independence in 2002. Since then, cataract still remains the main cause of reversible blindness in Timor-Leste. Due to taboo and lack of education, majority of the patients do not opt for eye consultation. Because of which, surgical outreaches have been used as one of the tools by the Ophthalmology Department of Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares (HNGV) to reduce the number of blindness due to cataract.

Aim: The purpose of this study was to determine the final visual outcome of patients who undergo cataract surgery through outreach services in Timor-Leste.

Methodology: The study began with a week at the cataract surgical outreach in remote areas of six different locations of Timor-Leste. Data were collected from all patients who had cataract surgery during the program from July–December 2017. Patients were identified by the surgery sheets.

Results: A total of 215 (M: 56%, F: 44%) cataract surgeries were performed in outreach for a week, in six months period of time. Of these, 60% were right eye and 40% left eye. Of the total, 204 had uncomplicated cataract surgery, while 11 required anterior vitrectomy and ACIOL (anterior chamber intraocular lens) insertion. For accurate interpretation of the visual outcome, patients were divided into three groups depending on first day of post-operation. Vision of 6/18 or better was used to define acceptable post-operative vision. This group consisted of 86 (40%) patients; 6/18=12 (14%), 6/15=13 (15%), 6/12=26 (30%), 6/9=8 (9%), 6/7.5=10 (12%) and 6/6=17 (20%). Regular (6/24–6/60) and poor visual outcome (<1/60) were 78 (36%) and 51 (24%), respectively. From 78 patients with regular outcome, 68 (87%) were due to corneal edema, 2 (3%) hyphema and the rest air bubble and lens material retained with 3 (4%) and 5 (6%), respectively. The reasons for poor visual outcome secondary to comorbidities associated were 25 (50%) with macular degeneration, 8 (16%) with previous trauma + lens dislocation, 10 (20%) with glaucoma and 7 (14%) were uneducated.

Conclusion: Cataract surgery outreach was successful and improved the vision of patients in rural area.

Recommendations: It is recommended that cataract surgery outreach should be continued to cover all the territories in Timor-Leste.

Biography

Frenky Ramiro de Jesus has completed his Post-graduate Program in Ophthalmology for from the Medical Faculty and Health Science of University of Timor-Leste in 2017. He is now working at the Ophthalmology Department of the Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares (HNGV).

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