



“Diabetic Retinopathy Awareness Month (DREAM)”



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Introduction

Background (what is diabetic retinopathy? what is its current situation?)

As we all know that entire world is observing November month as world diabetic month. We are also observing November as “Diabetic Retinopathy Awareness Month (DREAM)” with various activities. Diabetic Retinopathy means damage to the retina (innermost part of our eye which is crucial for vision). It is one of the leading causes of avoidable blindness not only in developed country but also in developing and underdeveloped country like Nepal. As the prevalence of diabetes is on increasing trend so as diabetic retinopathy. According to a data by International Diabetic Federation (IDF) the number of diabetes will reach to 64 million by 2040 which is almost double than today. Similarly, if current trend continues, 1 in 10 adults will have diabetes by 2040. Of these people 1 in 3 will develop diabetic retinopathy which can cause blindness. In context of Nepal, there is no definite study but it is assumed that there are total approx. 9 lakh diabetic patients and 2 lakh are affected with various stages of retinopathy who are in risk of being blind. Lack of awareness regarding eye involvement in Diabetes and importance of early eye check up to prevent blindness is the major cause which delay early seeking for eye consultation in diabetics resulting in blinding complications.

Why blindness from diabetes is increasing in Nepal?

I believe that few major barriers are there which is mainly responsible for increasing blindness from diabetic retinopathy in Nepal.

1. Lack of awareness that diabetes can cause blindness
2. Ignorance i.e some people know that diabetes can cause damage to eye but still neglect this aspect and don't do regular eye check up
3. All people have no access to eye hospital.

What activities I am doing to reduce blindness?

I am working as a retina specialist for more than 9 years at Lumbini Eye Institute, Shree Rana Ambika shah Eye hospital. From very beginning I am actively doing awareness campaign for this.

Basically I am doing two activities

a) Awaring people about diabetic retinopathy

In this, I am telling about the disease, how to prevent it? How to treat it? I am doing this by various means mentioned below (please find the relevant photographs attached with this email

1. Regular talk program in local radio and television about diabetic retinopathy.
2. Articles in nepali news paper
3. Poster, pamphlets about awareness
4. Awareness material printed T-shirts
5. Observing every year November month as world diabetic month
6. Awareness program to various groups in community
7. I believe that we can reach to everyone only if we can aware diverse group in our community. So I am regularly giving awareness lectures to groups like health students, nurses, diabetic patients, journalists and even priests. I tell everyone in this group to share what you learn to others so that we can make a chain of awareness.
8. Use of Social sites

YouTube...I have created a video in Nepali language about diabetic retinopathy. This is probably the first and only video in Nepali language till now.

Please go to YouTube and search as

“Diabetic Retinopathy awareness video in nepali language”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp4VHhOdB2I&t=91s> (Link to my video)

Facebook...As I have already mentioned that whole world is observing November as world diabetic month, I am writing various post about diabetic retinopathy in nepali language in my facebook page “Gyanu Raja”.

Beside I have created a page in facebook named “Diabetic Retinopathy Society Nepal-Dirson” where everyone can find

everything about diabetic retinopathy in Nepali. This page already has more than 1100 likes and followers.

b) Free screening camps in different area of district

doing free screening camp of retinopathy to all diabetic patients in different area in our district. We do it with the help of various local organizers N:B (please find the attached photos of screening camps) (Figures 1-4).

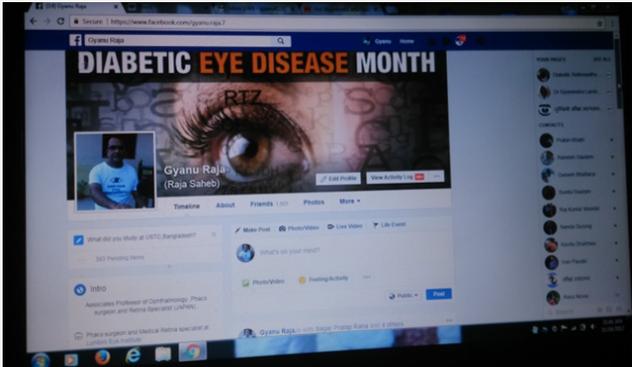


Figure 1

I believe that everybody may not be able to come to hospital for retina check up so I go to community usually. I am regularly



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



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