



Title: Preventing vision loss from diabetic retinopathy: Guiding primary care diabetic retinopathy screening in Canada through the use of provincial healthcare administrative data

Researchers:

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Research area: Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes

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Summary:

For individuals living with diabetes, one of the major complications of the disease is diabetic retinopathy (DR) which, if not treated, can lead to blindness. Depending on where a person lives in Canada, up to 60% of individuals with diabetes have not had their eyes examined within a one-year period. Knowing who has not had their eyes checked is not always possible for community-based doctors and nurses by looking at electronic health records but providing this information to doctors and nurses would help to improve DR screening rates across the country. This team grant proposes to support primary healthcare DR screening by using provincial administrative data in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador to determine who needs to have their eyes examined according to clinical practice guidelines. The generated lists of individuals will be provided to a community care setting to arrange an eye appointment. Coordination and capacity of care within the participating provinces will also be examined. Various research methods will be used to evaluate the effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, implementation issues and barriers, and sex- and gender-related differences in the provision of care and keys to success. The broader goal of this public health initiative is to identify unmet care needs, and to begin the pathway towards the creation of a Canadian DR screening program, similar to that in the United Kingdom, and consequently eliminate DR as the leading cause of blindness in working-age individuals.