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Perspective

Exploring the Prevalence and Risk Factors of Dry Eye Disease

Miao Dana*

Department of Optometry, University of Louisville, Louisville, USA

DESCRIPTION

Dry Eye Disease (DED) is a prevalent ocular condition that affects a substantial number of individuals worldwide. Characterized by insufficient tear production or poor tear film quality, DED can lead to discomfort, visual disturbances, and a significant reduction in the quality of life. Understanding the epidemiology of DED is crucial for healthcare professionals, researchers, and policymakers to develop effective strategies for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. DED is a widespread condition, affecting individuals across different age groups, genders, and geographical regions. Various population-based studies have provided insights into the prevalence of DED, enabling a better understanding of its scope and impact. While the reported prevalence rates may vary due to different diagnostic criteria and study methodologies, they collectively highlight the significance of DED as a public health concern. In general, the prevalence of DED tends to increase with age, with studies reporting higher rates among the elderly population. However, DED is not limited to older individuals, as it can also affect younger adults and children. Gender differences in prevalence have also been observed, with some studies suggesting that women are more prone to developing DED than men. Environmental factors, such as climate and air pollution, can further contribute to the prevalence of DED, with higher rates often observed in regions with dry and polluted environments.

Several risk factors have been identified in the development of DED. These factors can be categorized into modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors, offering opportunities for prevention and intervention. Modifiable risk factors include lifestyle choices, such as prolonged digital device use, inadequate blinking, and exposure to dry or windy environments. Additionally, certain systemic conditions, such as diabetes, thyroid disorders, and autoimmune diseases, have been associated with an increased risk of DED. Hormonal changes, particularly in women during pregnancy or menopause, can also contribute to the development of DED. Non-modifiable risk factors include age, gender, and genetic predisposition. Aging is a significant risk factor, as tear production and quality naturally decline with age. Women, due to hormonal fluctuations, are more susceptible to DED than men. Family history and genetic factors also play a role in individual susceptibility to DED, highlighting the complex interplay between genetic and environmental factors in the development of the disease. DED is often associated with various comorbid conditions, further impacting the overall health and well-being of individuals. Studies have shown an increased prevalence of DED among patients with systemic diseases, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and Sjögren's syndrome. This suggests that DED may share common pathophysiological mechanisms with these conditions or may arise as a consequence of the systemic disease itself. Psychological and emotional well-being can also be affected by DED. Chronic eye discomfort, visual disturbances, and decreased quality of life associated with DED can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and decreased productivity. The bidirectional relationship between mental health and DED highlights the need for a holistic approach to managing the condition, addressing both the physical and psychological aspects. Psychological and emotional well-being can also be affected by DED. Chronic eye discomfort, visual disturbances, and decreased quality of life associated with DED can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and decreased productivity. Managing DED requires a holistic approach, addressing both the physical and psychological aspects of the condition.

Correspondence to: Miao Dana, Department of Optometry, University of Louisville, Louisville, USA, E-mail: Miaodana@hotmail.com

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