

Diabetic Retinopathy - "There is Life beyond Anti-VEGF"

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The world is bracing up for a Diabetic Epidemic. With over 400 million diabetics at present and the number to reach 600 million by 2030 a catastrophe is waiting. We as ophthalmologists are concerned because Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) is slowly riding up the ladder as the leading cause of blindness in the world.

Pharmacotherapies in the form of anti-VEGFs and steroid implants have come in a big way in confronting this menace. But mind it they are costly, require repeated injections, there is a dearth of VR facilities in poor nations and despite all it is not yet a cure for the disease process. In this era of anti-VEGFs we forget a world beyond i.e. medical management of DR, which is cost effective and an adjuvant in the fight against DR related blindness [1,2].

The golden rule we suggest is the rule of '5'. Before looking at the fundus verify the glycosylated hemoglobin, RFT, lipid profile, Hb & BP of the patient. DCCT, UK prospective diabetes study, Role of statins [3], Role of Anemia [4], Role of Nephropathy [5] all have conclusive evidence based support.

Pregnancy, Obesity, smoking, exercise all has a bearing on DR and has to be taken into account [6]. In my practice I use calcium dobesilate, vitamin C, antioxidants, micro-nutrients with good results, though based on limited research. Please look at the Internist's prescription, if they have prescribed rosiglitazone or Losartan expect intractable macular edema.

Yes, Anti Vegf's have been a panacea but if you also become a part time physician it will definitely reduce over dependence on anti-VEGFs with a cost effective [7,8] and broader cure of the disease.

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