



A Review of Access to Eye-care Services in Nigeria



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Introduction

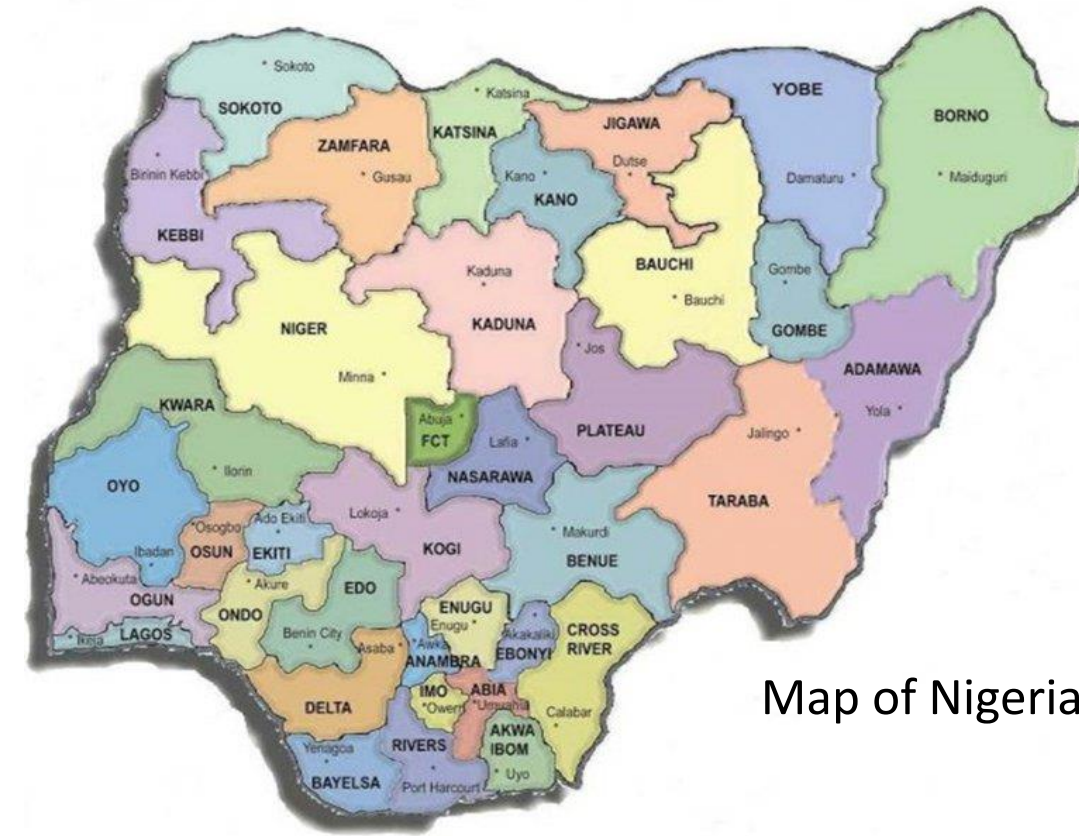
Visual impairment and blindness is a significant public health problem (Abdul et al, 2009; Adepoju et al, 2012). In Nigeria, the prevalence of visual impairment is almost 5%. It is estimated that 4.25 million adults aged 40 years are visually impaired and 400,000 adults suffer from severe vision loss. There are existing barriers limiting access to eye care in Nigeria, which may affect meeting the Global eye care Action Plan of 2013.

Objective

The objective of this study is to identify barriers and facilitators to access to eye care services in Nigeria.

Methods

A systematic review of previous studies on eye care in Nigeria was conducted through Biomed Central/Ophthalmology using the key words 'eye care in Nigeria'. Only articles on visual impairment, causes of vision loss and barriers to access to eye care services were used.



Map of Nigeria

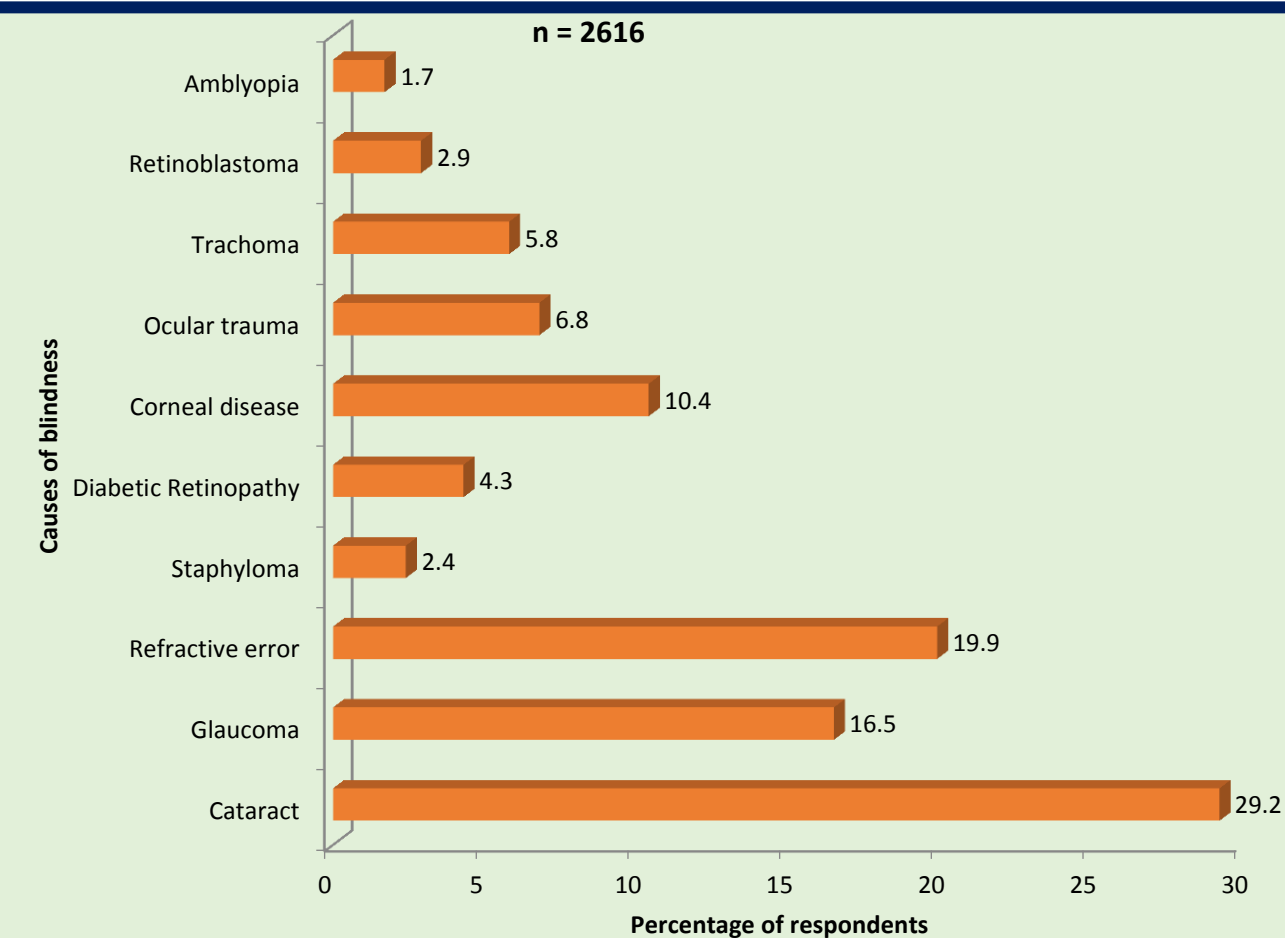
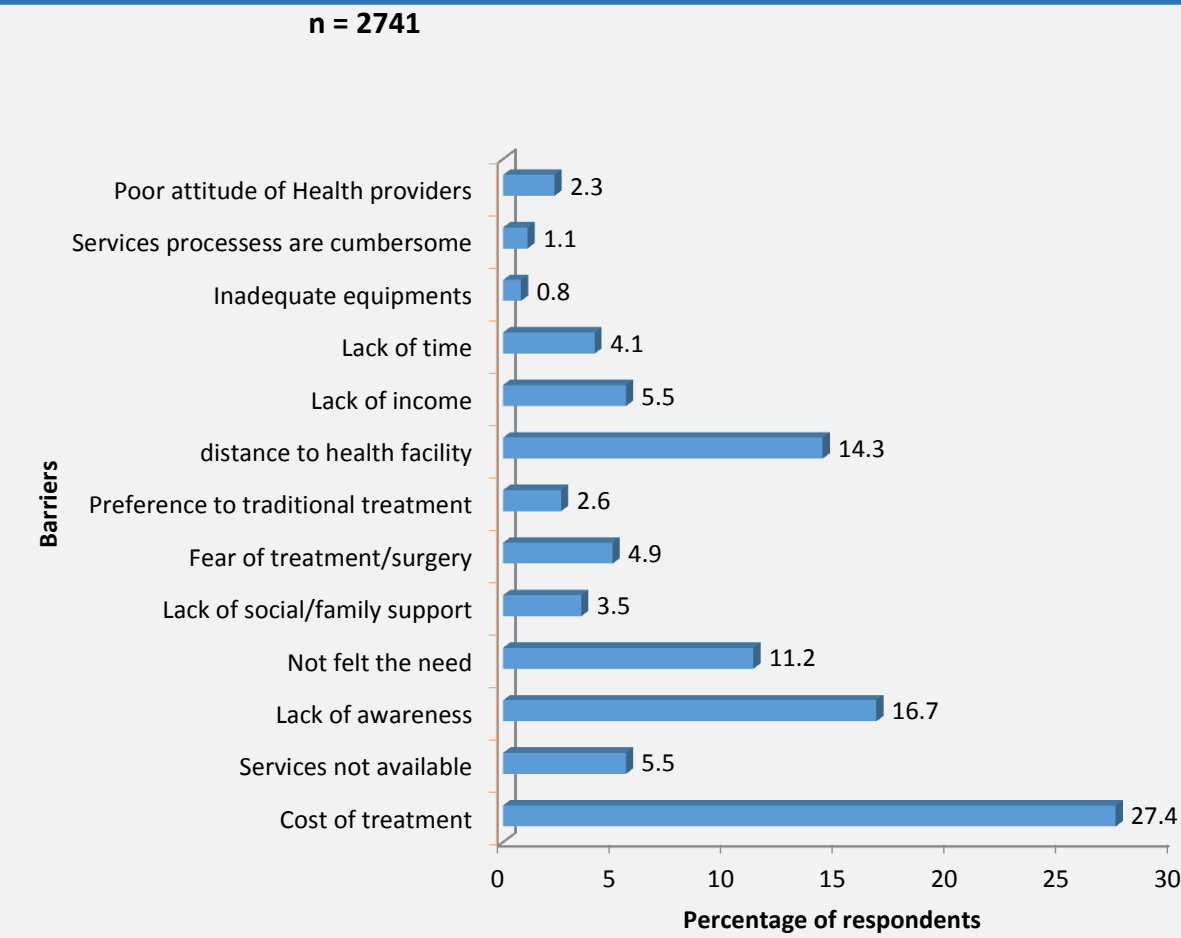
Results

The main barriers to eye care especially among the disadvantaged, marginalized and poorer population include;

- Cost of treatment,
- Availability of eye services
- Absence of trained eye care providers
- Transportation
- Distance to health facility/eye clinic
- Low awareness level of available services
- Fear of operation/eye surgery and
- Low eye care seeking behaviour

Key Question

How do we get more people involved in practicing and promoting preventive eye care?



This preliminary review identified the following strategies to alleviate eye care problems

- ❖ Training and distribution of eye care practitioners in rural and urban health facilities
- ❖ Inclusion of routine eye check as part of the Primary Health care service

A more extensive review using a variety of databases could shed more light on eye care needs in Nigeria.

Discussion/Conclusion

Visual impairment are principally caused by cataract, refractive errors and glaucoma. These are all avoidable with early diagnoses .

- Eye care services must be available, affordable and accessible to the people, if we must reduce the prevalence of visual impairment by 25% by the year 2019 as proposed by the Global eye care Action Plan of 2013 (IAPB,2015).
- Optometrists and Ophthalmologists should embark on public awareness campaigns and advocate for policies aimed at encouraging routine eye checkup especially among school aged children.
- Research aimed at understanding the eye care needs of communities should be encouraged.
- A more extensive review is currently in progress to get a more in depth understanding of the issue

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