

EDITORIAL INSIGHTS

Why Young Doctors See Their Future in Ophthalmology

- ◆ Globally over 200,000 Ophthalmologists are currently in practice and training
- ◆ In India, 25,000 Ophthalmologists are in Practice
- ◆ A Future Proof Career in the Age of AI

Ophthalmology is increasingly attracting medical graduates worldwide because it offers a unique blend of clinical precision, surgical innovation, and cutting edge technology. In recent years, ophthalmology has emerged as one of the most attractive specialties for medical graduates. Ophthalmology has evolved from a quiet niche into a high-stakes, high-tech specialty. It offers a rare "triple threat" in a medical career: the delicate art of microsurgery, the analytical challenge of diagnostic medicine, and a lifestyle that actually protects against burnout. In a competitive medical world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, ophthalmology offers unique advantages that make it future proof.

For decades, the most ambitious medical graduates flocked to cardiology or neurosurgery. But a shift is happening. Today's top-tier students are looking at the eye—not just as an organ, but as a gateway to the most advanced technology in medicine.

Why Medical Graduates Are Choosing Ophthalmology

- ✧ **High demand for eye care globally:** With aging populations and rising rates of diabetes and myopia, ophthalmologists are needed more than ever.
- ✧ **Balance of medical and surgical practice:** Unlike many specialties, ophthalmology allows doctors to combine outpatient care with advanced microsurgery, offering diverse career paths.
- ✧ **Lifestyle and career flexibility:** Ophthalmology often provides better work life balance compared to high intensity specialties like cardiology or neurosurgery.
- ✧ **Rapid technological growth:** Imaging modalities such as OCT (optical coherence tomography) and fundus photography generate vast datasets, making ophthalmology a fertile ground for AI integration.
- ✧ **Ophthalmology is the 'canary in the coal mine' for AI in medicine.** Because the eye provides a direct window into the body's vascular and neural health, ophthalmologists are becoming the primary gatekeepers for systemic health AI—detecting everything from cardiovascular risk to neurological decline through a simple retinal scan."

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K. Bangar Raju
EDITOR

(by K. Bangar Raju)

TOP VIEW

Catch Glaucoma Before It Catches You

☞ Know the Signs, Save Your Sight

- * **Prompt treatment initiation and regular follow-ups are key to preserving sight.**
- * **In India 12 Million people live with Glaucoma**
- * **This number is projected to reach 15-16 million by 2030**
- * **Nearly 8 million people are blind in India**
- * **Around 43 million people are blind globally**

Glaucoma, often called **"the silent thief of sight"**, is one of the most dangerous eye diseases because it damages the optic nerve—the vital channel that carries visual information from the eyes to the brain. What makes glaucoma particularly alarming is its stealth: symptoms often go unnoticed until irreversible vision loss has already occurred.

Globally, it is a leading cause of blindness, and in **India** alone, nearly **12 million people live with glaucoma**, contributing to **12.8% of blindness nationwide**. Once vision is lost, it cannot be restored. The only way to protect sight is through early detection and timely treatment.

An estimated 80 million people were affected in 2020, and this number is projected to exceed 111 million by 2040 globally, underscoring the urgent need for global action. Although vision loss caused by glaucoma is irreversible, it is largely preventable through early detection and appropriate treatment.

(cont...3rd page)

Sri M Ramdas, Chairman, Board of Trustees

The Financial Year 2026–27 has begun on a strong note with impactful eye care outreach across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. In April and May alone, Sankar Foundation organized over 100 free eye camps and performed a large number of surgeries. These initiatives have strengthened public trust and confidence. A highlight was the life changing surgeries provided to poor and needy patients under the Dr. NTR Vaidya Seva programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Congratulations to all our doctors, outreach team, and employees for this remarkable achievement.



Sri A Krishna Kumar, Managing Trustee & CEO

The Financial Year 2026–27 has commenced with inspiring progress in our mission. In just April and May, Sankar Foundation organized over 100 free eye camps across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, delivering specialized care in glaucoma, retina, cornea, and cataract. A large number of surgeries were successfully performed at our main hospital and in all branch centres, significantly expanding our impact and strengthening community trust. Heartfelt congratulations to all the doctors, outreach teams, and employees of Sankar Foundation for this outstanding achievement.



Performance at a Glance

Total Eye Surgeries : 5,16,246 Since Inception
Total Outpatients Screened : 29,99,664 Since Inception

WHY YOUNG DOCTORS SEE THEIR FUTURE IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

Global Statistics on Ophthalmology Careers

- ◆ **Worldwide:** Over 200,000 ophthalmologists are currently in practice and training, according to the **International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO)**. Despite this, there is a growing gap between demand and supply.
- ◆ **Distribution:**
 - ❖ **China:** 28,338 ophthalmologists (20 per million population).
 - ❖ **India:** 25,000 ophthalmologists (20 per million population) with significant regional disparities.
 - ❖ **Brazil:** 14,679 ophthalmologists (71 per million).
 - ❖ **United States:** There are about 18,948 active ophthalmologists in the United States, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges' Data Report. (32 per million population.)
 - ❖ **Africa:** Many countries have fewer than 5 ophthalmologists per million, highlighting a critical shortage.
 - ❖ The average ophthalmologist-to population ratio in developed countries stands at approximately 39 ophthalmologists per million people.

Global Context

- ◆ **United States & Europe:** AI is being integrated into routine retinal screening programs, but regulatory hurdles mean ophthalmologists remain central to validation and treatment.
- ◆ **Asia (India, China):** With large populations and high prevalence of diabetes and myopia, ophthalmology offers immense career growth. AI adoption is accelerating, but the shortage of specialists ensures strong demand for human expertise.

- ◆ **Middle East & Africa:** Tele-ophthalmology and AI are bridging gaps in access, yet ophthalmologists are needed to train, supervise, and deliver surgical interventions.

Advantages in an AI Dominated World

- ◆ **AI as a partner, not a replacement:** AI tools can screen retinal images, detect diabetic retinopathy, and predict disease progression. However, interpretation, patient counselling, and surgical skill remain uniquely human.
- ◆ **Enhanced efficiency:** Automated retinal screening and predictive modelling reduce workload, allowing ophthalmologists to focus on complex cases.
- ◆ **Precision medicine:** AI helps identify novel biomarkers and supports personalized treatment strategies, but ophthalmologists guide clinical decisions.
- ◆ **Global tele-ophthalmology:** AI-powered platforms enable remote diagnosis, expanding access in underserved regions while still requiring trained specialists to validate and act on findings.

AI Integration & Perceptions

- ◆ A 2026 survey of 525 participants (353 medical students, 172 ophthalmologists) found:
 - ❖ 80% of medical students and 72% of ophthalmologists believe human expertise is more reliable than AI for diagnosis.
 - ❖ While AI is valued for efficiency and screening, trust and responsibility remain firmly with clinicians.

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **Career growth:** Ophthalmology offers stability, global demand, and opportunities to work at the intersection of medicine and technology.

- ◆ **AI advantage:** Far from replacing ophthalmologists, AI strengthens their role by improving efficiency and accuracy.

- ◆ **Global relevance:** Whether in advanced economies or developing regions, ophthalmology remains a critical specialty where human judgment and surgical skill are irreplaceable.

Globally, ophthalmology is a growing specialty with more than 200,000 practitioners worldwide, yet demand continues to outpace supply—especially in Asia and Africa. AI is rapidly transforming diagnostics, but surveys show over 70% of ophthalmologists and medical students still trust human expertise more than AI alone, reinforcing the specialty's career appeal.

The Future Outlook

For medical graduates, ophthalmology offers more than just career stability—it provides a front row seat to innovation. As AI reshapes diagnostics and expands reach, ophthalmologists will continue to lead in surgical excellence, patient care, and ethical oversight. Globally, the specialty is positioned not as one threatened by technology, but as one empowered by it.

In a competitive medical world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, ophthalmology provides medical graduates with a future proof career. It combines the precision of microsurgery, the intellectual challenge of diagnostics, and the transformative potential of AI.

Ophthalmologists are not being replaced—they are becoming more empowered, making this specialty one of the most attractive choices for career growth today. For medical graduates seeking growth, balance, and global relevance, ophthalmology is not just a career choice—it is a vision for the future.

**Eyes that
captivate hearts**

Catch Glaucoma Before It Catches You

Why Early Detection Matters

Unlike cataracts, where surgery can restore sight, the damage caused by glaucoma is irreversible. The disease often advances silently over many years, leaving patients unaware until vision loss is severe, explained **Dr. T. Raveendra, Head of Glaucoma at Sankar Foundation**. He stressed that regular, comprehensive eye examinations—assessing intraocular pressure, optic nerve health, drainage angle, and peripheral vision—remain the most effective safeguard against blindness.



Those at higher risk of glaucoma include:

- ✦ Adults over 40
- ✦ Individuals with a family history of glaucoma
- ✦ Patients with diabetes, hypertension, or a history of eye injuries
- ✦ People with thin corneas, prolonged steroid use, or belonging to certain ethnic groups
- ✦ For these groups, **screening is the only way to catch it before symptoms appear**, emphasizes **Dr. P. Manjuvalli, Senior Consultant in Glaucoma at Sankar Foundation**.



According to Glaucoma Research Foundation there are :

5 Early Warning Signs of Glaucoma

Even though glaucoma often develops quietly, there are subtle signals that should never be ignored. Recognising them early can mean the difference between saving sight and losing it forever.

1. **Blurred Vision** Persistent haziness or progressive blurriness may indicate rising eye pressure damaging the optic nerve. Unlike temporary blurriness, glaucoma-related changes worsen over time.

2. **Halos Around Lights** Seeing rainbow-coloured rings around lights, especially at night, is a red flag. This symptom interferes with daily activities like driving and signals elevated eye pressure.
3. **Recurrent Headaches** Frequent, worsening headaches—sometimes severe and sudden in angle-closure glaucoma—can be accompanied by nausea or blurred vision. These require urgent medical evaluation.
4. **Eye Pain** While open-angle glaucoma is usually painless, angle-closure glaucoma can cause sharp or throbbing eye pain, often with redness or halos. Severe pain is a medical emergency.
5. **Tunnel Vision** Gradual loss of peripheral vision, leading to tunnel-like sight, is a hallmark of advanced glaucoma. Left untreated, it progresses to complete blindness.

Current status of Glaucoma in India

Glaucoma has emerged as a major public health challenge in India, currently affecting over 12 million people—most of whom remain undiagnosed. By 2030, this number is projected to rise by 20–25%, reaching 15–16 million cases.

Global Status of Glaucoma

According to **World Health Organisation**, glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness worldwide, posing a major public health challenge. In 2020, an estimated 80 million people were affected globally, and this number is projected to exceed 111 million by 2040, driven largely by ageing populations.

According to **International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)**, **Globally, around 43 million people are blind, while in India the number is closer to 8 million.**

Worldwide Blindness

- ✦ Total blind population (2020 estimates): 43 million people worldwide
- ✦ People with moderate-to-severe vision impairment (MSVI): 295 million globally

- ✦ Projection for 2050: Sight loss (including blindness and MSVI) could affect over 1.7 billion people due to aging and population growth.

In Blindness in India

- ✦ **India's blind population: About 8 million people are blind.**
- ✦ Moderate-to-severe vision impairment: Over 70 million people in India live with significant vision loss.
- ✦ **Trend:** Numbers are rising due to population growth and aging, making blindness a major public health challenge. Unlike cataracts, the vision loss caused by glaucoma is irreversible.

The India Today studies indicate that nearly 90% of glaucoma cases go undetected, primarily due to limited awareness and inadequate access to routine eye examinations. While the risk escalates after the age of 40, younger populations are not immune.

- ✦ Glaucoma affects 2-3% of the population with risk rising sharply after age 40. Of these without detection and treatment, 10% or more may progress to bilateral blindness.
- ✦ **Silent disease** — Detect early through screening.
- ✦ Beyond screening comprehensive eye exam confirms (Visual Fields, OCT imaging and more)
- ✦ Prompt treatment initiation and regular follow-ups are key to preserving sight.

Bottom Line

Glaucoma is not just an eye condition—it is a public health challenge and a personal risk. Its silent onset, irreversible damage, and lifelong consequences make awareness and early detection critical. The five warning signs above are not minor inconveniences; they are signals of a disease that can lead to blindness.

"If you are over 40 or have a family history, book a comprehensive eye exam this month. It takes 30 minutes to save a lifetime of sight."

(The author is the Editor with inputs from National Library of Medicine & The Times of India)

**Eyes that
speak volumes**

SRI A. KRISHNA KUMAR INSPIRES STAFF TO LEAD WITH INTEGRITY & UPHOLD VALUES

- Best Performers Honoured with Awards and Recognition
- Doctors Must Lead in Surgeries and Outreach

Sri A. Krishna Kumar, Managing Trustee & CEO, urged all employees to take full ownership of their responsibilities while discharging duties and delivering services to patients. He emphasized that this commitment is essential to enhancing the reputation of the foundation and upholding its core values.

Speaking at the all-staff meeting held on 23rd May 2026 to review the foundation's performance, he highlighted the pivotal role of doctors in advancing surgical excellence and patient care. He further stressed that outreach activities are vital to achieving success and ensuring quality eye care for all.

As part of the program, **Sri Krishna Kumar honored the best performers** from the main hospital and its branches for April 2026, presenting them with certificates and cash prizes as part of an HR initiative to motivate and encourage excellence. He also extended his congratulations to employees who received promotions, acknowledging their dedication, commitment, and professional growth.

The meeting was attended by Heads of Clinical Departments, Heads of all other departments, and a large number of employees, reflecting the collective spirit of the foundation. The HRD Department played an active role in organizing the event, ensuring its success. Sri KV Venugopal, DGM (Operations) delivered the presentation highlighting the activities and performance of the foundation.

Best performers of April Month

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) Mrs G Gayatri | Main Hospital Naidutota |
| 2) Mrs A Komala Devi | Gajuwaka Branch |
| 3) Sri A Santosh Kumar | Maddilapalem Branch |
| 4) Sri N Ajay Babu | Madhurawada Branch |
| 5) Sri M Gowree Prasad | Srikakulam Branch |



Mrs G Gayatri, Main Hospital Naidutota



Mrs A Komala Devi, Gajuwaka Branch



Sri A Santosh Kumar,
Maddilapalem Branch



Sri N Ajay Babu,
Madhurawada Branch

**Eyes that
sparkle like stars**

Name of the Employee	Promoted	Department
Medepalli Suresh Babu	Sr. Manager OT	Operation Theatre
Palli Ramu	Sr. Manager - Optical Stores	Opticals
Gorugantula Lakshman Kumar	Asst. Manger - Stores	Stores
Chiriki Venkata Ramana	Asst. Manager - CEC	Community Eye Care
Muchakarla Sai Kumar	Asst. Manager - CEC	Community Eye Care
Savalapurapu Raju	Sr. Nurse - OT	Operation Theatre
Balla Revathi	Jr. Manager - Billing	Empanelment
Mohammed Abdul Shabeer	Manager - Billing	Empanelment
Kotyada Siva Nageswara Rao	Sr. Manager - Accounts	F & A
Golagani Santhosh Kumari	Manager - Accounts	F & A
Yelisetti Bala Rakesh	Asst. Manager - F & A	F & A
Kadimi Bhavani	Jr. Manager - Counselling	Patient Care

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR EYESIGHT NATURALLY

Improving eyesight isn't about quick fixes—it's about building healthy habits that protect and support your vision over time. While natural methods cannot replace corrective lenses or medical treatment when needed, they are highly effective in reducing strain, maintaining eye comfort, and lowering long term risks. Eye specialists emphasize that a combination of good lifestyle practices, proper nutrition, and regular eye check ups is the most sustainable way to preserve vision.



1. Follow the 20-20-20 Rule

Extended screen use tires the eye muscles and causes dryness. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at

least 20 seconds. This simple habit relaxes the focusing muscles and eases digital eye strain.

2. Blink More Often

Blinking lubricates the eyes and prevents dryness. Screen users blink about 60% less, which worsens irritation. Make a conscious effort to blink every few seconds, especially during computer or phone use.

3. Get Proper Sleep

Your eyes repair and regenerate during rest. Aim for 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night. Poor sleep can lead to dry eyes, twitching, and blurred vision. Keep your sleep environment dark, calm, and screen free to support deep rest.

4. Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can cause blurry vision and dryness. Drink 8–10 glasses of water daily. Limit caffeine and alcohol, as they dehydrate the body and affect eye comfort.

5. Protect Eyes from UV Exposure

Wear sunglasses with UV protection

outdoors. This reduces long term damage and lowers the risk of cataracts and retinal degeneration.

6. Maintain Proper Lighting & Posture

Reading or working in dim light or poor posture increases strain. Use good ambient lighting and keep screens at eye level to reduce fatigue.

7. Exercise Regularly

General physical activity improves circulation, which benefits the eyes. Simple eye exercises may not correct vision permanently, but they help with flexibility, focus, and comfort—especially for those with screen related strain.

Bottom line: Natural methods like hydration, sleep, blinking, and the 20:20:20 rule can significantly improve eye comfort and reduce strain. Combined with a balanced diet and regular eye exams, these habits form the foundation for healthier vision over time.

(Insights by **K Bangar Raju**, Editor with inputs from Indian Express Lifestyle Desk)

OUTREACH INITIATIVES BY SANKAR FOUNDATION – SRIKAKULAM BRANCH

A series of impactful outreach initiatives were organized by the officials of Sankar Foundation's Srikakulam branch, aimed at enhancing the institution's reputation and creating greater awareness among senior citizens and the advocates fraternity in Srikakulam town.

Sri M. Chandrasekhar, Manager, and Sri Ravikumar, Branch In-charge, led the activities

and highlighted the advanced clinical

facilities and patient-centric services offered at the hospital. Their efforts left a strong impression on the participants.

Leaders of the Srikakulam Bar Association, including Sri K. Raja Rao, President, and Sri Sarala, Vice President, engaged in meaningful interactions with Dr. Anna Joseph, Sri Chandrasekhar, and

Sri Ravikumar of Sankar Foundation, further strengthening community ties.

On 14th May 2026, Sankar Foundation organized an awareness eye camp at the Bar Association premises within the district court. The initiative was designed to promote

eye health and provide free screening services to the legal fraternity. A large number of advocates participated in the free eye screening camp.

Visit by DMHO & District Coordinator

Officials from the District Medical & Health Office (DMHO), including Sri P. Avani, District Coordinator of Dr. NTR Vaidya Seva, visited the Srikakulam branch to review the facilities. They expressed satisfaction with the hygienic conditions, quality of services, and patient care standards

maintained at the hospital. Their appreciation reinforced the Foundation's commitment to excellence in healthcare delivery.

Free Eye Camp at Jeypore District Court

Sankar Foundation organized a free eye camp exclusively for the legal fraternity at the District Court in Odisha On 8th May. Shri Pradeep Kumar Mahanta, District Court & Sessions Judge Inaugurated the Camp at Jeypore. The initiative was aimed at promoting eye health and providing accessible care to advocates.

Around 200 advocates underwent eye screening during the camp. Patients diagnosed with eye ailments were counselled and advised on appropriate treatments, including surgical interventions where necessary.



**Eyes speak
louder than words**

Happenings

BRANDIX – SANKAR FOUNDATION ACHIEVES MILESTONE: 150th FREE EYE SCREENING CAMP



Sankar Foundation doctors and team actively engage in the eye camp.

2026. The camp witnessed an impressive turnout from nearby villages, marking a significant step in the mission to eliminate avoidable blindness.

Sri P.C. Dora Swamy, Partner at Brandix India, commended Sankar Foundation for its sustained efforts over the years in bringing light into the lives of thousands through these eye camps.

Camp Highlights

The camp was led by **Dr. Bharathi** and **Dr. Apoorva**, supported by: Sri N. Appala Raju, Senior Manager, Sri Arun Kumar, Manager, Outreach Department, Sri Eswar Rao, Senior Manager, Sri Ramu, Manager, Optical Department, Sri Ratan Raju, Manager (Optometry).

A dedicated team of 35 employees from Sankar Foundation ensured smooth organization and patient care throughout the event.

A key highlight was the **spot delivery of 314 spectacles**, which drew appreciation from Brandix for its immediate impact on patients.

Camp Statistics

◆ Total OP screened:	462
◆ Total glasses prescribed:	408
◆ Spot delivery of glasses:	314
◆ Selected for surgeries:	43
◆ Medicines distributed:	140



All patients identified for surgeries successfully underwent the required procedures, further strengthening the camp's impact on community eye health.

Brandix India, one of the country's largest manufacturing hubs located at Atchutapuram in Anakapalle district, in partnership with Sankar Foundation, achieves a significant milestone of successfully organizing its **150th free eye screening camp** on 10th May,

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY CELEBRATED



International Nurses Day celebrations at Sankar Foundation and at

International Nurses Day is celebrated at Sankar Foundation on 12th May, 2026. Smt. N. Devi, Nursing Superintendent at Sankar Foundation, led a dedicated team of nurses who work tirelessly to serve patients with passion, and together they celebrated the day with great enthusiasm.

In a message, Sri A Krishna Kumar, Managing Trustee & CEO said that it's a

wonderful moment to pause and appreciate the nurses who form the backbone of healthcare of our hospital and emphasised the role of nurses in patientcare.

At Srikakulam Branch: Dr Sudhir Kumar, Sri M Sriravi Kumar, Branch In-charge, Smt Jayasri, Smt Neeraja, Smt Sirisha celebrated the day with enthusiasm and cut a cake to mark the occasion.



Srikakulam branch.

Every year on 12 May, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth, to honour the invaluable contributions of nurses worldwide. The theme this year was "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives." Each year, the International Council of Nurses sets a theme focusing on challenges and opportunities in nursing.

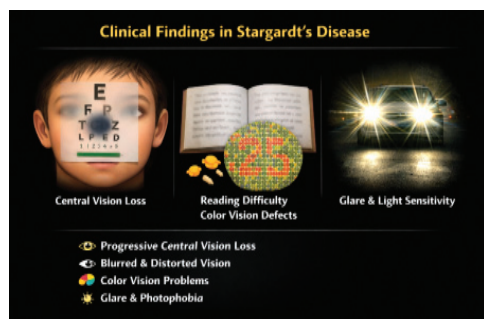
**Eyes that
mirror the soul**

STARGARDT'S SPOTLIGHT: FROM SYMPTOMS TO SOLUTIONS

Stargardt's Disease is the most common inherited juvenile macular dystrophy, leading to progressive central vision loss in children and young adults. It is caused by mutations in the ABCA4 gene, diagnosed through clinical examination, retinal imaging and genetic testing, and currently managed with supportive care and low-vision rehabilitation rather than curative treatment.

Clinical Features

- ◆ **Onset:** Usually in **childhood or adolescence**, though late-onset cases exist.
- ◆ **Symptoms:**
 - ✧ Progressive loss of central vision (blurriness, dark spots, distortion).
 - ✧ Colour vision difficulties and light sensitivity.
 - ✧ Trouble adjusting between bright and dark environments.
 - ✧ Peripheral vision often remains intact.
- ◆ **Progression:** Vision may decline to 20/200 (legal blindness) but typically stabilizes thereafter.



Diagnosis

- ◆ **Dilated eye exam:** Reveals yellowish flecks (lipofuscin deposits) in and around the macula.
- ◆ **Fundus photography:** Documents characteristic flecks and macular changes.
- ◆ **Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT):** Shows photoreceptor layer disorganization.

*The eye is the
jewel of the body*

- ◆ **Fluorescein angiography:** Highlights dark areas in retinal tissue.
- ◆ **Electroretinography (ERG):** Assesses retinal response to light.
- ◆ **Genetic testing:** Confirms ABCA4 mutations and distinguishes Stargardt from other macular dystrophies.



Management

Researchers recommend avoiding excessive exposure to sunlight and avoid taking vitamin A supplements. It may also be helpful to avoid excessive dietary intake offloads that contain vitamin A, such as carrots and liver.

- ◆ **No definitive cure yet;** management focuses on slowing progression and maximizing remaining vision.
- ◆ **Protective measures:**
 - ✧ Wear **sunglasses and hats** outdoors to reduce UV damage.
 - ✧ **Avoid high-dose vitamin A supplements** (can worsen disease).
 - ✧ **Do not smoke;** avoid second hand smoke.
- ◆ **Vision rehabilitation:**
 - ✧ **Low-vision aids** (magnifiers, electronic readers).
 - ✧ **Training programs** to adapt daily living skills.
- ◆ **Clinical trials:**
 - ✧ **Gene therapy** and drug therapy (e.g Emixustat to reduce toxic by products).

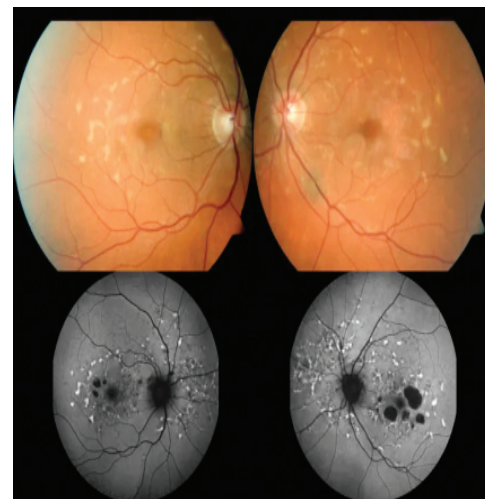
Dr K Annaji Rao
Senior Consultant
Retina Department



Risks & Considerations

- ✧ **Vitamin A supplements:** High doses accelerate retinal damage.
- ✧ **UV exposure:** Increases progression risk; strict eye protection is essential.
- ✧ **Genetic counselling:** Important for families, as carriers may not show symptoms but can pass the gene.
- ✧ **Emerging therapies: gene therapy, stem cell research**
- ◆ **Gene therapy:** This approach involves altering or replacing faulty genes within a person's cells to treat or prevent disease.

Stem cell research: Stem cells are unique because they can develop into many different cell types. Research explores using them to regenerate damaged tissues, treat conditions like spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease, and heart disease, and better understand how diseases develop.



Fundus: Yellow white flecks scattered in posterior pole. beaten bronze macula
FAF: Hyperauto fluorescent spots corresponding to lipofuscin.

Clinical Snapshot Metrics- May 2026

✦ Total Eye Surgeries	3,062
✦ Cataract Surgeries	2,110
✦ Retina Surgeries	93
✦ Retina Injections	189
✦ Glaucoma Surgeries	26
✦ Cornea Surgeries	772
✦ Paediatrics Surgeries	14
✦ Orbit & Oculoplasty	229
✦ Total OP Screened	18,024

BRANCHES

✦ Srikakulam	
Eye Surgeries + Injections	467
✦ OP Screened	2,407
✦ Maddilapalem	
Eye Surgeries + Injections	103
✦ OP Screened	1,253
✦ Gajuwaka	
Eye Surgeries + Injections	45
✦ OP Screened	1,077
✦ Madhurawada	
Eye Surgeries	13
✦ OP Screened	671
✦ Total 57 Outreach free eye camps conducted and screened 3,547 patients and Performed 1,111 surgeries.	

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SEE THE SIGNS: HOW CHOLESTEROL IMPACTS EYE HEALTH

High cholesterol is often dubbed a "silent killer" because it typically develops without obvious symptoms. However, your eyes can act as a window into your vascular health. Certain changes in the eyelids, cornea, or retina are frequently the first clinical indicators of lipid imbalances and an increased risk of heart disease. Spotting these signs early can protect both your sight and your life.



1. Xanthelasma: Yellow Eyelid Patches

Xanthelasma are soft, yellowish plaques that appear on the inner corners of the eyelids. They don't usually affect vision or cause pain, but they are strongly linked to high cholesterol, thyroid problems, or diabetes. They are more common in women over 40, especially after menopause. Treatment can include laser therapy or minor surgery for cosmetic reasons, but managing cholesterol levels is most important.

2. Corneal Arcus: Ring Around the Cornea

Corneal arcus looks like a whitish or grey ring around the edge of the cornea. In older adults, this is usually harmless. But in people under 40, it can signal inherited high cholesterol or early vascular disease. Even though it doesn't affect eyesight, it should prompt cholesterol testing and lifestyle changes.

3. Hollenhorst Plaques: Cholesterol Crystals in the Retina

These tiny, shiny yellow deposits are seen in the retinal blood vessels during an eye exam. They come from cholesterol plaques in larger arteries, often the carotid. They can cause temporary or permanent vision loss and signal a risk of stroke. Immediate medical evaluation is needed.

4. Retinal Vascular Occlusions: Blocked Eye Vessels

High cholesterol can cause blood clots that block veins or arteries in the retina. This leads to sudden vision loss, retinal bleeding, or a pale retina with a cherry-red spot. These are eye emergencies that require urgent treatment to prevent permanent damage.

5. Why the Eyes Are Affected

The eye's blood vessels are delicate and highly active, making them vulnerable to cholesterol build-up. Risk factors include unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, diabetes, obesity, and hormonal changes after menopause. Some populations, such as South Asians, are at higher risk.

Protecting Your Vision and Health

Regular eye exams and cholesterol checks are essential. Cholesterol above 200 mg/dL or LDL above 130 mg/dL should be addressed. A heart healthy lifestyle—Mediterranean diet, regular exercise, and quitting smoking—helps lower risk. Statins may be prescribed for high risk patients. Cosmetic treatment of eyelid plaques is optional, but vascular blockages require urgent medical care.

(Insights by K Bangar Raju, Editor with inputs from The Times Of India Health)

**Your eyes are so mesmerizing
when you laugh."**