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Social Cost of Blindness Due to AMD and Diabetic Retinopathy in the United States in 2020.

Moshfeghi AA, Lanitis T, Kropat G, Kuznik A, Gibson A, Feng H, Prenner J.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE: To estimate the social cost of blindness due to wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD), diabetic macular edema (DME), and proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR) in the United States in 2020. PATIENTS AND METHODS: Excess costs that occur because of blindness were estimated as the difference in costs in blind versus non-blind individuals. Per-patient costs were aggregated using the number of cases of blindness due to wAMD, DME, and PDR projected in 2020. RESULTS: Associated annual excess direct costs, indirect costs, and quality-adjusted life year loss per blind individual were $4,944, $54,614, and 0.214, respectively. Combining estimates with 246,423 projected cases of blindness due to wAMD, DME, and PDR translated to total societal costs of $20 billion in 2020, estimated to triple by 2050. CONCLUSION: Excess social costs associated with blindness in individuals with wAMD, DME, and PDR are substantial, with more than half of the burden attributed to indirect costs. [Ophthalmic Surg Lasers Imaging Retina. 2020;51:S6-S14.].

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