The Dangers of Telemedicine for Glaucoma in the Light of COVID-19 without being able to assess disease parameters

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Introduction

Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide, estimated to affect >60 million people. This condition is clinically defined as a group of progressive optic neuropathies having characteristic patterns of visual field loss. Access to glaucoma specialists is quite challenging and likely to become more difficult as because of the pandemic and limited access to hospitals.
The pandemic has led to an array of stressors, given the progressive but indolent nature of a disease that can lead to blindness and requires close ongoing monitoring and treatment. The current health environment is particularly worrisome for elderly patients because they are most at risk for vision loss from glaucoma and are also among the highest risk groups for COVID-19 mortality.

On the other hand ,using telemedicine for glaucoma (teleglaucoma) has the potential to increase access to glaucoma care by improving efficiency and decreasing the need for long-distance travel for patients.

CASE REPORT

54 YEARS OLD LADY PRESENTED WITH PAINLES LOSS OF VISION DURING LOCKDOWN.
ON EXAMINATION ANTERIOR SEGMENT SHOWED MILD HYPEREMIC CONJUNCTIVA IN LEFT EYE , NORMAL ANTERIOR CHAMBER NO INFLAMMATION , WIDE ANGLES ON GONIOSCOPY AND INTRA OCULAR PRESSURE BY GOLADMAN APPLANATION TONOMETER WAS 15 IN BOTH EYES ,
LEFT AFFERENT PUPILLARY DEFECT .
DILATED FUNDUS EXAMINATION SHOWED HEALTHY NEURORETINAL RIM IN RIGHT EYE WITH NORMAL MACULA , VESSELS AND RETINA .
LEFT EYE GLAUCOMATOUS CUPPING 0.9 , HEALTHY MACULA AND VESSELS .

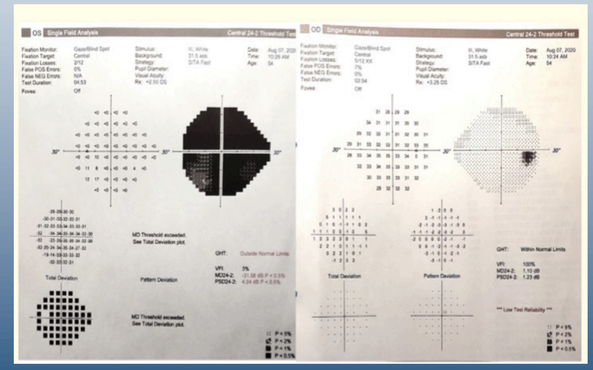
Results

Telemedicine is a potential strategy to improve glaucoma detection and management as well as to improve effectiveness, access, and adherence with eye care. Telemedicine is already used in eye care, predominantly in the areas of screening for diabetic retinopathy and retinopathy of prematurity, using digital fundus photography to achieve effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. In the past 20 years, there has been a growing interest in using telemedicine in the detection and management of glaucoma, with numerous articles describing pilot programs in various parts of the world.
However , Glaucoma is a silent blinding disease , patient will not be able to recognize spikes of high / low intraocular pressure till the vision is completely lost likewise the case we are

reporting .

Conclusions

IN CONCLUSION , THE USE OF TELEMEDICINE CAN BE USEFUL IN GLAUCOMA BUT ONLY IF THE DISEASE PARAMETERS SUCH AS IOP , DISC IMAGING ,FIELD TEST CAN TAKE PLACE . WE CAUTION AGAINST THE USE OF VIRTUAL CONSULTATION WITHOUT THIS ABILITY .



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