

## HOSPITAL CORNEAL RETRIEVAL PROGRAMME

*Jayashree Dora\*\**, *Dhaneswari Jena\**, *Gayatri Rath\**,  
*J.P.Behera\*\*\**, *R.C.Mohapatra\*\*\**

Professor\*\*\*, Asso. Proff.\*\* Asst Proff \* MKCG Medical College, Berhampur

Out of 13 million blind people in India, about 1 million are corneal blind, who can be treated by corneal transplantation. About 30,000 new cases are added each year to the list. However the no of corneal transplantation per year is around 4500 - 5000 only, due to lack of donated eyes. The deaths per year is around 8 million, out of which only 20 to 30 thousand eyes are collected each year in India, out of which only 4 to 5 thousand eyes are suitable for corneal transplantation.

*There are two methods of procuring donor eyes :*

1. From those who have signed a pledge form during life to donate the eyes after death.( willing donation).
2. From dead persons at home or hospital, by approaching near relatives & with their due consent

Though the number of pledged eyes are high, the actual number of eyes collected at any given time is very low. It may take several years for a pledged donor to become actual donor. Eye balls or corneas can be collected, if relatives of deceased give consent for eye donation even without prior pledging by deceased i.e. prior pledging by donor is not mandatory for Eye donation. So living relatives of deceased play an important role in eye donation. However Pledging of eyes to donate after death should not be discouraged among people, rather it should be encouraged to create awareness, sensitize & to make a responsible person for motivation of eye donation, in case of any deaths in his/her family or nearby people.

To get more number of corneas, Eye Bank Association of India have started Hospital Corneal Retrieval Programme (HCRP), where attempts are being made to motivate & counsel the relatives of a deceased person in Hospital for Eye Donation by sensitizing them regarding corneal blindness & benefits of corneal transplantation, and organizing for quick, convenient enucleation or corneoscleral button excision.

### Advantages of HCRP

The HCRP focuses on multispecialty hospitals to retrieve eye ball or corneal tissue because of various advantages like :

1. As number of deaths are more in hospitals in comparison to home deaths there by more number of corneas can be collected if relatives are motivated
2. Corneal tissue can be obtained from younger donors as hospital deaths can occur in younger personals from accidents, diseases etc. compared to home deaths thereby a good quality of corneal tissue can be obtained
3. Quick access leading to reduction of time interval between death to enucleation / corneal excision - another factor for getting good quality of tissue.
4. Detailed medical history and investigation reports can be available easily.
5. Eye donors can become multiple organ donors if the relatives wish to donate

Under this programme, trained counselors (Grief Counselors / Eye Donation Counselors) are involved who are stationed at multi specialty hospitals round the clock & keep rapport with hospital staff. When ever any death occurs in any ward, the concerned staff (Nurse / Doctor / Social worker ) inform the counselors that he or she counsel, motivate & request family members to donate the eyes of their deceased relatives and contribute to world wide effort to reduce corneal blindness. In absence of Grief counselors, the Hospital personals can also help in reducing the burdon of corneal blindness by involving themselves in this activities. Doctors, Nurses, Hospital social workers, especially in words of ICCU, Surgery, Trauma & Medicine, where chances of death are high, can involve themselves in this noble work.

How to counsel & Motivate the relatives of deceased for eye Donation ?

It is very difficult & sensitive issue to request the relatives of a deceased to donate the eyes of their passed away dear one, who are in grief. People coming to hospitals may be sensitized for eye Donation by various methods- Installing posters on eye donation, Installing public awareness systems ( Electronic moving ) displaying messages regarding eye donation etc. in patient waiting areas. The Grief counselor or hospital staff or social worker, who ever is going to motivate, should have complete knowledge regarding eye donation, should be able to answer any queries by relatives, rule out any myths & misconceptions regarding eye donation .

#### Steps in counseling

- w On the event of death, Grief counselor should reach the ward as soon as possible on getting information from hospital staff /or Hospital staff him/ her self act as counselor
- w Approach the decision maker (Spouse / Adult offspring / Parents in case death of young children ) of family & take him/her into a nearby separate pleasant room.

- w Introduce him/her self
- w Convey his/her condolence
- w Discuss briefly regarding corneal blindness & eye donation.
- w Ask them if they would like to donate the eyes of their loved one
- w Once the family has given consent, Call the nearest Eye Bank as quickly as possible.
- w Help to get death certificate as early as possible
- w Switch off the fan in the room
- w Elevate the head end of deceased
- w Apply ice bags to the eyes with eye lids closed

#### Conclusion

By implementing Hospital Corneal Retrieval Programme, various Eye Banks have been able to collect more number of Good quality Corneas. Eye Banks in our state especially Govt. sector ( Eye Bank in private sector have already started HCRP ) should start HCRP to increase procurement of quality corneas. Periodic reorientation of medical personnel of concerned departments by Meetings & CMEs would be supportive to success of the programme.