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Diagnostic Correlation between General Practitioners and the Ophthalmologist in the Management of Eye Diseases

Co-rélation Diagnostique Entre les Médecins Généralistes et les Ophtalmologistes dans la Gestion des Maladies Oculaires

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES: To determine the accuracy of diagnosis of ophthalmic disorders as well as the adequacy of referral of patients with ophthalmic disorders for specialist eye care by the general practitioners (GP).

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This was a hospital-based descriptive study. Patients selected by systematic random sampling at the General Out-Patient Department (GOPD) of a tertiary hospital were evaluated by the ophthalmologist after they had been independently assessed by the General Practitioners. Diagnoses and referral decisions of the GP were compared with those of the ophthalmologist using Kappa Statistics.

RESULTS: A total of 382 patients were studied while 22 GPs participated in the study. Ocular disorders were found by the ophthalmologist in 112 (29.3%) patients while the remaining 270 (70.7%) were normal. Only 36 (32.1%) of those with ocular disorders had a diagnosis of ocular disorders by the General Practitioners. A correct diagnosis was made by the GPs for 18 (16.1%) patients ($k=0.102$, $p=0.001$); and the highest diagnostic agreement was obtained for conjunctivitis ($k=0.464$, $P=0.001$). No patient with posterior segment disorder was diagnosed by the GPs. Majority (81%; $k=0.616$, $p=0.001$) of referrals were in agreement with expected referral decision. However, 28 (25.0%) under-referrals and 16 (19.0%) over-referrals were noted.

CONCLUSION: About one-third of all the patients assessed had an ocular disorder, but the general practitioners detected these disorders only one-third of the time; a correct diagnosis of ocular disorders was made in only 16.1%, while no posterior segment disease was diagnosed. Wrong referral decisions were made in up to one-third of patients. Regular update courses for general practitioners on ophthalmic evaluation will help address these observed deficiencies. *WAJM* 2022; 39(6): 563–567.

Keywords: General Practitioner, Ophthalmologist, Eye disorders, Diagnosis, Agreement.

RÉSUMÉ

OBJECTIFS: Déterminer le niveau d'accord entre les médecins généralistes (MG) et l'ophtalmologiste dans le diagnostic et l'orientation des patients atteints de troubles oculaires

MATÉRIEL ET MÉTHODES: Il s'agissait d'une étude descriptive en milieu hospitalier. Les patients sélectionnés par échantillonnage aléatoire systématique au service général de consultation externe d'un hôpital tertiaire ont été évalués par l'ophtalmologiste après avoir été évalués de manière indépendante par les médecins généralistes.

Les diagnostics et les décisions d'orientation du médecin généraliste ont été comparés à ceux de l'ophtalmologiste à l'aide de Kappa Statistique.

LE RESULTATS: Au total, 382 patients ont été étudiés. 22 MG ont participé. Des troubles oculaires ont été trouvés par un ophtalmologiste chez 112(29,3%) patients tandis que les autres 270(70,7%) étaient normaux. Seulement 36(32,1%) des personnes atteintes de troubles oculaires ont été diagnostiquées par un médecin généraliste. Le diagnostic correct a été posé par le médecin généraliste pour 18(16,1%) patients ($K=0,102$, $P=0,001$). La concordance diagnostique la plus élevée a été obtenue pour la conjonctivite ($K=0,102$, $P=0,001$). Aucun patient présentant un trouble du segment postérieur n'a été diagnostiqué par le médecin généraliste. La majorité (81% ; $K=0,616$, $P=0,001$) des références étaient en accord avec la décision de référence attendu. Cependant, 28 (25,0%) sur-références se sont produites.

CONCLUSION: Environ un tiers de tous les patients évalués présentaient des troubles oculaires, mais le médecin généraliste n'a détecté ces troubles qu'un tiers du temps ; un diagnostic correct de troubles oculaires n'a été posé que dans 16,1% des cas, alors qu'aucune maladie du segment postérieur n'a été diagnostiquée. De mauvaises décisions d'orientation avaient été prises chez près d'un tiers des patients, des cours de mise à niveau régulier pour les médecins généralistes sur l'évaluation ophtalmique permettront de combler les lacunes observées. *WAJM* 2022; 39(6): 563–567.

Mots-clés: Médecin Généraliste, Troubles Oculaires, Diagnostic, Référence, Accord.

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Abbreviations: GOPD, General Out-Patient Department; GP, General Practitioners.