

Abstract

Blindness certificates from the region of Oberbayern were studied to obtain data for the prevalence, incidence and the causes of blindness in Bavaria. This investigation reveals increasing rates for the prevalence and incidence of blindness. Most (60% of the prevalence and 70-80% of the incidence) of the blind are older than sixty years of age. The prevalence (2.5%) and incidence rate for children (blind before 18 years of age) are low. Macular degeneration (15.4%) has the highest prevalence rate followed by glaucoma (14.3%), retinopathia pigmentosa (10.3%), high myopia (11.5%) and optic atrophy (8%). Blindness from diabetic retinopathy accounts for 7.1% of cases. Macular degeneration is also the leading cause of blindness when incidence rates (28%) for all ages are calculated. Lower incidence rates are found for glaucoma (17%) and diabetic retinopathy (13%). For blind children malformations of the eyes (18.7%) are found to be the leading cause of blindness in regard to prevalence figures. The retinopathy of prematurity (17.2%) and complex cerebral disturbances (16.1%) do present with similar figures.