

ABSTRACT

Background

There is currently limited information as to which conditions are most prevalent in communities in developing countries. This makes effective planning of eye services difficult.

Methods

3,899 eligible individuals were recruited and examined in a cross-sectional survey in Asa Local Government Area, Nigeria. Those who self-reported an ocular morbidity were also asked about their health-seeking behaviour. Health records of local facilities were reviewed to collect information on those presenting with ocular morbidities.

Results

25.2% (95% CI: 22.0–28.6) had an ocular morbidity in at least one eye. Leading causes were presbyopia and conditions affecting the lens and conjunctiva. The odds of having an ocular morbidity increased with age and lower educational attainment. 10.1% (7.7–13.0) self-reported ocular morbidity; 48.6% (40.4–56.8) of them reported seeking treatment. At the facility level, 344 patients presented with an ocular morbidity over one month, the most common conditions were red (26.3%) or itchy (20.8%) eyes.

Conclusion

Ocular morbidities, including many non vision impairing conditions, were prevalent with a quarter of the population affected. The delivery of eye care services needs to be tailored in order to address this need and ensure delivery in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.