

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND:

To examine the prevalence, patterns and trends of vision impairment and its causes from 1990 to 2010 in Central and South Asia.

METHODS:

Based on the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2010 and ongoing literature searches, we examined prevalence and causes of moderate and severe vision impairment (MSVI; presenting visual acuity $<6/18$, $\geq 3/60$) and blindness (presenting visual acuity $<3/60$).

RESULTS:

In Central Asia, the estimated age-standardised prevalence of blindness decreased from 0.4% (95% CI 0.3% to 0.6%) to 0.2% (95% CI 0.2% to 0.3%) and of MSVI from 3.0% (95% CI 1.9% to 4.7%) to 1.9% (95% CI 1.2% to 3.2%), and in South Asia blindness decreased from 1.7% (95% CI 1.4% to 2.1%) to 1.1% (95% CI 0.9% to 1.3%) and MSVI from 8.9% (95% CI 6.9% to 10.9%) to 6.4% (95% CI 5.2% to 8.2%). In 2010, 135 000 (95% CI 99,000 to 194,000) people were blind in Central Asia and 10,600,000 (95% CI 8,397,000 to 12,500,000) people in South Asia. MSVI was present in 1,178,000 (95% CI 772,000 to 2,243,000) people in the Central Asia, and in 71,600,000 (95% CI 57,600,000 to 92,600,000) people in South Asia. Women were generally more often affected than men. The leading causes of blindness (cataract) and MSVI (undercorrected refractive error) did not change from 1990 to 2010.

CONCLUSIONS:

The prevalence of blindness and MSVI in South Asia is still three times higher than in Central Asia and globally, with women generally more often affected than women. In both regions, cataract and undercorrected refractive error were major causes of blindness and MSVI.