Supplementary file 1

DR screening in India

- There is no national screening programme for DR in India and the retinal services for patients are not funded.
- In hospitals annual retinal check-up system is initiated to monitor the retinal complications among diabetic patients. Based on the severity of DR follow-up is advised by an ophthalmologist and corresponding treatment is given.
- In India, retinal screening is carried out in camps, telemedicine and opportunistic screening. With telemedicine, retinal screening camps are managed by ophthalmologists and local community workers.
- With help of mobile van facilities, retinal images are obtained and transmitted to an expert who reads them remotely. The patient then receives the diagnosis and is counselled for further treatment and follow-up.
- In case of opportunistic screening, diabetic patients are screened when they visit a physician or diabetologist.
- Trained technicians take fundus images and direct the patient to the ophthalmologist who advises on treatment and follow-up.
- Patients usually visit a diabetologist to monitor the glucose level and few of them examine the fundus status. If they suspect DR, patients are referred to an ophthalmologist.

Integrated approach for DR care

- Currently patients do receive reminders about their next visit. In terms of enhancing access, currently eye care is provided only in specialty hospitals or exclusive eye clinics.
- Government run eye hospitals are also available but most are located in urban areas. For people in rural or outlying areas to take time off to come to the eye hospital, is time consuming and would mean loss of a day’s wages.
- However, both government and private run eye hospitals do run outreach camps which help to bring eye care virtually to the door step. Screening for DR also happens in these camps.