

The experiences of women living with trachoma in Africa: A qualitative systematic review

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Background

- Trachoma remains the second leading cause of blindness in the world
- Majority of the cases occur in the Middle East, Asia and Africa
- Africa is the most affected with 18 million cases (WHO, 2013)
- Although women are the most affected, current intervention strategies have ignored a gender dimension in tackling the disease

Objectives

- Synthesize the best available evidence on the experiences of women living with trachoma in Africa that could inform policy and practice

Method

- We searched for studies with qualitative methodologies on Africans
- Searched data bases were not limited to PubMed , Psych-Info and Google Scholar etc.
- Eligible studies were critically appraised for methodological rigor , and synthesized by two independent reviewers using JBI QARI tool

Results

Economic burden

- The disease drains family resources and causes poverty
- Women are unable to work and earn money.
- Women with the disease are unable to engage in many income generating activities

Social burden

- Women suffer from social exclusion, isolation, public embarrassment, stigma, ridicule, deprivation from sexual pleasures , loss of marital partners etc

Psychological burden

- Women suffer from stress, depression, trauma and the desire to commit suicide

Conclusion

- Management of trachoma goes beyond clinical aspects to include economic, socio-cultural and psychological factors
- More qualitative primary studies are needed on WLWT
- A gendered approach should be included in all interventions