

PROJECT ABSTRACT

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<i>Title of Project:</i>	<i>Does Diabetes Mellitus cause blindness?</i>
<p>Purpose: The purpose of this project is that through a national diffusion advertising campaign using as many communication resources as possible, all people who suffer from DM know about the ophthalmological consequences that they could suffer if they do not maintain adequate control in their blood glucose level and thus avoid blindness. If we succeed, we will reduce the number of blind people caused by cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.</p> <p>In El Salvador everyday hundreds of people are diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus (DM). Most of them will develop blindness in a short or medium term if they are not treated early and timely. To avoid this, it is necessary that they receive the appropriate information about the consequences of this disease that could mark the rest of their lives, bringing with them psychological, familiar and economic problems.</p> <p>Methods: El Salvador has a population of 6.4 million people and a territorial extension of 21 thousand square kilometers. To cover the entire country, it was sent and place printed advertisements with a short but accurate message, in all private and community ophthalmological clinics, as well as those belonging to foundations, public hospitals and social security. The main messages were:</p> <p>1/ DIABETES CAN CAUSE BLINDNESS! 2/ IS IT TRUE THAT DIABETES CAUSES BLINDNESS?</p> <p>Time and distance were obstacles that we had to overcome to visit distant clinics, as well as obtain the permission of the authorities of public institutions and foundations. To do this, we developed a work plan in association with the ASO team, pharmaceutical companies and ophthalmologist colleagues who work in their private clinics and public institutions.</p> <p>The financing for the printing of banners was received from Laboratorio Sophia a pharmaceutical company as well as from the ASO's own funds. The radio and television interviews were arranged through journalists in charge of health sections in different media.</p> <p>We use social media platforms to spread the message to different sectors of the population which made it easier to reach a larger population of different ages, even those who had never consulted with an ophthalmologist.</p> <p>Results: We visited all the clinics around the country where an ophthalmologist works, both private and public, placing banners in each of them and giving talks to patients in the institutions that were visited.</p> <p>We discussed the ophthalmologic consequences of people suffering from DM on major television channels and the nation's largest radio stations, through interviews with members of the ASO and its board of directors.</p> <p>We opened pages on social networks, reaching more people with DM and their families, which were of great help in sharing the message nationally and internationally. Approximately 2 million Salvadorans live abroad and frequently travel to our country to treat their illnesses; they were a population that we reached by breaking the barriers of distance through social networks. More Information @Cegueraenladiabetes.</p> <p>Conclusions: Diabetic patients and their families should know that DM causes blindness if it is not diagnosed and treated early.</p>	

Education to the population in a globalized world and with multiple tools can prevent millions of people from losing their vision as a result of cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy secondary to this disease that every day claims more victims.

The doctor's mission is not only to cure, but to prevent and educate.