

Natural history of diabetic retinopathy in a retrospective cohort of type 1 diabetics

Historia natural de retinopatía diabética en un estudio a largo plazo en pacientes con diabetes tipo 1. Factores de riesgo para progresión a enfermedad proliferante

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Background: Diabetic retinopathy is one of the most common causes of blindness among adults.

Aim: To report the natural history of diabetic retinopathy among Chilean patients with type 1 diabetes followed for a mean of 18 years. **Material and methods:** Retrospective review of medical records of 39 patients aged 26 to 70 years, (20 females, 78 eyes) with type 1 diabetes controlled by the same ophthalmologist from 1971 to 2008. A questionnaire was sent to each patient and their treating physician to request information about the evolution of the disease and metabolic control.

Results: The questionnaire was answered by 24 patients (62%) and 21 attending physicians (54%).

Small hard drusen were observed in 25 patients (64%). In 12 cases the drusen were detected before the development of any type of retinopathy. Eleven women became pregnant and retinopathy progressed in four of them. Twenty three patients (59%) developed proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR). Patients with PDR had a signi