Optometry Tidbit

Glaucoma

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Over 80% of the sensory information transmitted to the brain is perceived through the eyes. Hence, it is pertinent to preserve our eyesight through early intervention. Glaucoma is a disease which when caught early can be slowed down. Late detection can lead to blindness.

Glaucoma is an ocular disease that damages the optic nerve, which is for delivering visual information from the retina to the brain. Left undetected, results may include permanent vision loss and it is one of the most common causes of blindness in this country.

There are many types of glaucoma, but the most common type of glaucoma, open angle glaucoma occurs with an increased intraocular pressure, a result of fluid buildup in the eye. This fluid is called aqueous humor fluid.

Figure 1
A comparison of a normal eye and an eye with Glaucoma. The increase in pressure induces strain on the optic nerve.

Figure 2
An illustration of what a patient at various stages of Glaucoma may be experiencing: a gradual loss of vision. The range of vision resembles that of a tunnel.
http://www.higginseyesurgeon.com/glaucoma.html

There are usually no symptoms associated, other than gradual loss of peripheral vision. At this stage, however, much damage has already been done. This is why regular eye examinations with routine dilations and visual field tests are extremely important. Seeing an optometrist once a year will allow for early treatment and hence minimizing vision loss with this disease. There is currently no cure for Glaucoma, but it can be managed with prescription eye drops and/or surgery.
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http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/glaucoma/DS00283
http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/glaucoma-eyes
http://www.glaucoma.org/glaucoma/diagnostic-tests.php#tonometry