Title: A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO ASSESS PERCEPTION ABOUT DIABETIC EYE DISEASES IN A BANGLADESHI RURAL COMMUNITY

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Introduction: Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB) and ORBIS International have been trying to install a project on diabetic eye disease in Thakurgaon, the remotest district in northern Bangladesh. The study was designed to explore the knowledge, perception, interest on diabetes and diabetes related eye diseases, attribute and information channel among this rural group of people.

Methodology: Twenty focus group discussion (FGDs) and 20 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with different stakeholders among 220 participants aged above 40 years in 2 unions of each of the 5 sub-districts of Thakurgaon.

Result and discussion: Different extent of response came up in the study from zero to poor knowledge with huge misinformation among the people. Many of them even not heard of diabetes and had different wrong perception about diabetic complications, eye problems and treatment requirement. Not a single respondent heard about the disease, Diabetic Retinopathy (DR). A significant number of participants couldn’t explain the relation between diabetes and diabetic eye diseases. Regarding accessibility to information, 25% respondent told that they get information from announcement by mike, 17% from house hold visit, and another 17% from different types of community group meetings.

Conclusion: Findings in this study identified a range of opinions about diabetes, diabetes related eye disease and information channels. These perceptions helped later in designing BCC intervention strategy for the community including nearby hard-to-reach area.