



Awareness of Jordanian Desert Patients about Keratoconus and What is the Relationship between Desert Climate and the Spread of Keratoconus

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Opinion

After spending nearly three years working as an optometrist in the southern regions of Jordan, which are characterized by their dusty desert climate, I noticed the high prevalence of keratoconus cases. I also noticed the lack of awareness among patients about keratoconus, which made me feel responsible towards them. I decided to search for the reasons for its prevalence in the south, the link between the desert and keratoconus, and what I should do to increase awareness about this disease, which I consider one of the worst eye diseases. The beginning of the study was a search for the causes of the spread of keratoconus in the south and why there is a lack of awareness. I found that desert areas lack the medical services that cities enjoy due to their distance from cities and the lack of desire of medical personnel to live there, which clearly affected the medical awareness of the residents of those areas.

When studying the causes of keratoconus found in the references, it became clear that the most important and first cause is the genetic factor that is strongly present in the southern regions where consanguineous marriage is more prevalent than in the rest of the governorates of Jordan. It also became clear that the nature of the climate in the desert areas plays a major role in the spread of allergic inflammations, which are also considered in the classification

of most references as the second cause of keratoconus. If we want to be more accurate in describing the desert climate, we can describe it with two words; Dust and Dryness (since the atmosphere lacks humidity), both of which increase the feeling of dryness and the desire to constantly rub the eye. Here we find the third cause of keratoconus, which is constant rubbing.

After I finished analyzing the causes, I started a series of awareness campaigns, whether through our clinics spread throughout the south, affiliated with Shami Eye Center (the organization I work for), or by organizing free medical days that covered all the cities and villages of the southern governorates during the three years, which were carried out in joint cooperation between me and the charitable societies, schools and universities in the region, where I was conducting screening tests and initial examinations, searching for any sign indicating the presence of keratoconus. Our campaigns also included awareness lectures on the causes, signs and stages of keratoconus, and that each stage has its own solutions [1].

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- Dr. Omar Al-Zoubi,
- Dr. Rashid Nazzal,

- Dr. Firas Al-Razem

Reference

1. Health, Keratoconus. Johns Hopkins Medicine.