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**Frequency of glaucoma among patients referred to a Brazilian university hospital**

María de Lourdes Veronese Rodrigues¹, Tania Gisela Biberg-Salum², Paulo Augusto Arruda Mello³, Afonso Dinis Costa Passos¹, Regina Souza Carvalho⁴, Hissa Tavares-Gradvoh³, Marcelo Jordão¹, Newton Kara-Jose⁵, Jayter Silva Paula¹

¹Department of Ophthalmology, Medical School of Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto - Brazil, ²Medical School of Ribeirao Preto, University of São Paulo and UNIDERP, Ribeirao Preto and Campo Grande - Brazil, ³Federal University of Sao Paulo and Brazilian Council of Ophthalmology (CBO), Sao Paulo - Brazil, ⁴CBO, Sao Paulo - Brazil, ⁵Medical School of Ribeirao Preto, University of Sao Paulo and Fundacao Leiria de Andrade, Ribeirao Preto and Fortaleza - Brazil, ⁶University of Sao Paulo and CBO, Sao Paulo - Brazil

**Purpose:** As part of investigation focused on the rationalization of countrywide ocular health actions, the present study was conducted in order to determine the frequency of glaucoma among patients referred to a tertiary level hospital in the Southeast region of Brazil, a country with an estimated 2% prevalence of glaucoma.

**Methods:** All patients seen in the Ophthalmology Sector of the Medical School of Ribeirao Preto University Hospital during one week were invited to participate. Demographic data of patients were obtained by administrative personnel and diagnostics were provided by local ophthalmologists, according with the Brazilian Glaucoma Society (2009) criteria and based on assessment of optic nerve head, tonometry, gonioscopy, Goldmann perimetry and optical coherence tomography.

**Results:** Of the 851 patients evaluated, 169 (19.8%) presented glaucoma (86 men) and 10 (1.2%; 4 men) were classified as glaucoma suspects (ocular hypertension). Age ranged from 1 to 92 years (median = 64.0; mean = 60.1; standard deviation = 17.6 years), and 44% of the patients with glaucoma were under treatment for other ophthalmologic diseases. Among the glaucomatous patients, 114 (67.4%) were classified as having primary open-angle glaucoma, while 18 (10.6%) had primary angle closure glaucoma and 17 (10%) displayed secondary glaucoma (to trauma and surgery: 11 (6.5%); to uveitis: 5 (2.9%); and to topical use of steroid: 1 (0.6%). Other types of glaucoma found were neovascular and congenital glaucoma (7 [4.1%] and 5 [2.9%] patients, respectively), and unspecified glaucoma (8 patients; 4.7%).

**Conclusion:** The high frequency of glaucoma or ocular hypertension (19.8%) among patients referred to the tertiary level of ophthalmologic care indicates the importance of the disease and low coverage of glaucoma patients in the primary and secondary healthcare. Thus, the results justify further investments in identifying, monitoring and treatment of the disease.