

Gap analysis for cataract surgery in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia

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PURPOSE

- The proportion of vision loss attributed to cataract in the Indigenous population in very remote coastal and inland areas, was approximately 3.8% and 5.3% respectively.¹
- This compares with 1.8% for inner regions. Our aim was to conduct a gap analysis of cataract surgery in Indigenous Australians in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

LIONS EYE OUTBACK (LOV)

- LOV was established in 2010 with the support of the Lions Eye Institute.
- LOV aims to deliver quality specialist eye health care to regional, remote and Indigenous communities.
- Provides services throughout the Pilbara, Kimberley, Goldfields, Midwest and Great Southern regions of Western Australia.

METHODS

- Rates of vision loss for cataract can be estimated from the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey (NIEHS).
- The online eye care service calculator provides estimates of the number of Indigenous people requiring cataract surgery annually.²
- This data was compared to the actual number of cataract surgeries performed by Lions Outback Vision from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

RESULTS

- The total Indigenous Kimberley and Pilbara population in 2016 was 14,299 and 7,289 and the estimated 2020 population was 15,030 and 7,660 respectively based on the national average population increase from 2016 to 2020.^{3,4}
- The online calculator estimated the number of Indigenous people requiring cataract surgery to be 143 and 73 respectively.
- A total of 98 and 37 Indigenous people underwent cataract surgery in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions respectively in 2020. This represents 68.5% and 50.7% of the total demand.
- The total ophthalmological workforce requirement for cataract surgery was 0.8 EFT per year.
- Since the proportion of vision loss attributed to cataracts was 2.9 times higher in very remote inland regions, this requirement is estimated to be closer to 2.3 EFT per year.



CONCLUSIONS

- Approximately 68.5% and 50.7% of the total requirement for cataract surgeries was met in 2020.
- However, due to Australian Covid-19 restrictions, limitations were placed on elective surgeries from March 2020 to April 2020.
- The Lions Outback Vision Broome HUB extension is expected to reduce the gap in demand for critical eye care needs in this region.

REFERENCES

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