

CAST-Eye Bank Special Session I: Variations in Eye Banking in Different Localities - Successes and Challenges

Eye Banking in Mainland China

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In China, there are over 4 million people suffering from corneal blindness. Due to the large scale of industrial and agricultural activities in China, the number of new cases of corneal blindness caused by infections and injuries ranges from 150,000 to 200,000 annually. It is estimated that 90% of corneal blindness cases can be cured through corneal transplantation. However, there is a severe shortage of corneal donors in China, and less than 10,000 corneal transplantation are performed each year.

In the past, the development of eye banks in different regions of China was uneven, resulting in a lack of corneal donors and a lack of unified management and resource allocation mechanisms. National-level data on eye banks were also lacking. In 2022, a nationwide survey was carried out to study corneal donation and transplantation in China, following the last one which was conducted in 2011. The survey covered 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities (excluding the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macau Special Administrative Region, and Taiwan). Data were collected from 56 medical institutions in 29 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, with the exception of Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province.

The statistical results indicate significant improvements in the number of eye bank establishments, the availability of corneal donors, and the quality and safety control measures of the eye banks compared to over a decade ago. However, further development of eye banks in China is still needed.