

Commentary: Procurement, storage and utilization trends of eye banks in India

Sharma *et al.*^[1] have to be congratulated on publishing this article titled "Procurement, storage and utilization trends of eye banks in India" in the current issue of the IJO, which involved a lot of coordination among the major functioning eye banks in our country. This article brings out very interesting questions and sobering facts about the trends in eye banking and corneal transplantation in India.

1. **Do we need these many eye banks?** It is of interest to note that India is home to the largest number of eye banks in the world.^[2] It is an acknowledged fact that many eye banks are registered to fulfil the requirement of the statutory bodies such as Medical Council of India. It is time to ponder whether this requirement should be made compulsory or whether any sort of affiliations to a larger eye bank would suffice.
2. **Why are so many tissues being unutilized?** Some states do not have access to a good quality eye bank, and the surplus tissue available in other states is not able to reach the required places due to logistical difficulties. Well-managed functional eye banks need to come up in states where such facilities do not exist. While this effort should start, link programmes between states (where one state with surplus tissues could partner with another which requires tissues) could be a solution in the meantime.
3. **Learning to do TPK is more important than learning to perform lamellar surgeries:** As this study indicates, close to half of the transplantations performed in our country are due to infections or its sequelae. Effective public health programmes designed to prevent corneal ulceration is the need of the hour, rather than focussing on getting more and more tissues. Academic conferences should be designed to be relevant to the need of the society and more sessions should be allocated to discuss these issues.

This is also a time to gratefully acknowledge the selfless work done by our senior ophthalmic colleagues for having initiated and popularized eye donation activities in our

country. Without them, we would not be in this sweet spot of having become more choosy with selecting our tissues. Contemporary eye banks with high quality benchmarks, which are equidistantly placed alongside the lengths and breadths of our country, are the need for the hour.

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