

## Eye diseases cost upto \$27bn to Europe

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**Singapore:** European Forum Against Blindness (EFAB) has revealed the results of a six-country study which analyzed the economic impact of blindness and four leading eye sight conditions. EFAB assessed the burden of these on health systems and societies across Europe and found that interventions for these conditions could offset total economic costs of USD27 billion across the region.

Such interventions include appropriate early detection, prevention and treatment options such as screening for cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma followed by treatment, and anti-VEGF treatment for wet AMD.

"EFAB wants to draw attention to the importance of vision health and eye diseases, and ultimately prevent vision loss through more timely diagnosis and intervention," said Professor Ian Banks, EMHF and EFAB Chair. "The results of this study show the substantial threat to people's quality of life, and draw out the enormous economic burden imposed on societies across Europe. Through the inclusion of screening, earlier diagnosis and adequate care and appropriate and active treatment, we can already reduce the burden and minimize the risk for patients."

The study, conducted by the independent health economics group, Deloitte Access Economics, looked at France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Spain and the UK and showed that blindness is estimated to result in annual economic costs of over 7 billion Euro across the countries studied, with the majority of these costs estimated to be due to informal care, provision of day-to-day care for blind people by relatives and friends, which impacts the whole society.