

Accepted Manuscript

Cataract Surgical Coverage And Visual Acuity Outcomes In Rural China In 2014 And Comparisons With The 2006 China Nine-Province Survey

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PII: S0002-9394(18)30268-X

DOI: [10.1016/j.ajo.2018.06.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajo.2018.06.004)

Reference: AJOPHT 10548

To appear in: *American Journal of Ophthalmology*

Received Date: 27 February 2018

Revised Date: 29 May 2018

Accepted Date: 4 June 2018

Please cite this article as: Zhao; J, Xu; X, Ellwein; LB, Guan; H, He; M, Liu; P, Lv; J, Sheng; X, Yang; P, Yi; J, Cai; N, Yang; M, Jin; G, Leng; F, Li; F, Li; Y, Lu; H, Shao; W, Song; S, Yuan; Y, Zhuang; W, An. L, Cataract Surgical Coverage And Visual Acuity Outcomes In Rural China In 2014 And Comparisons With The 2006 China Nine-Province Survey, *American Journal of Ophthalmology* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.ajo.2018.06.004.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Estimate surgical coverage of cataract-related vision impairment and blindness and visual acuity outcomes in operated eyes in rural China in 2014 with comparisons with the 2006 Nine-Province Survey.

Design: Population-based, cross-sectional study.

Methods: Geographical cluster sampling was used in randomly selecting residents from a rural county or semi-rural district within 9 provinces: Beijing, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Heilongjiang, Jiangxi, Hebei, Ningxia, Chongqing and Yunnan. Persons 50 years of age or older were enumerated through household visits and invited to examination sites for visual acuity testing and ocular examination. Surgical coverage and visual acuity outcomes in 2014 were compared with data from the 2006 survey.

Results: Among 51,310 examined persons, surgical coverage among those presenting with cataract-related severe visual impairment or blindness ($<20/200$) was 62.7% overall, ranging from 43.4% to 83.6% across the 9 study sites. Un-operated cataract was significantly associated with older age, female gender, and lack of education. Visual acuity outcomes $\geq 20/63$ in cataract operated eyes was 62.2% overall, ranging from 51.6% to 78.6%, and 75.2%, ranging from 67.1% to 81.5%, with best corrected visual acuity. As a proportional percentage of cataract surgical coverage in 2006, overall surgical coverage increased by 81.4% during the 2006-2014 interval, and by 110% when adjusted for visual acuity outcomes $\geq 20/63$.

Conclusions: Cataract blindness control is well underway in rural China as evidenced by significant increases in cataract surgical coverage and improvement in visual acuity outcomes during the 2006-2014 interval. Further efforts are needed to provide greater access to affordable cataract surgery for the elderly, females and those with little or no education.

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