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## Medicine

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### ***Ocular Health in Native American Communities: A Short Review and Commentary***



**Introduction:** Compared to other ethnicities in the United States, ocular diseases are disproportionately higher severe among Native American patients. Ocular disease burden has severe quality of life implications such as decreased employment and mental health. Therefore, ocular healthcare is an important piece when discussing the narrative of Native American health disparities.

**Methods:** The literature review was conducted using two primary databases: Google Scholar and PubMed. Keywords related to Native American ocular health were utilized to identify relevant literature. Papers, articles, and books discussing topics such as Native American public health, general health, government policies, historical context, and ocular health were included. Data was extracted and synthesized to highlight common themes and challenges, providing insights into improving ocular health outcomes for Native American communities. Approximately 80 pieces of literature were screened and 42 were eventually included.

**Results:** Reports showcase ocular diseases are undertreated and underdiagnosed in Native Americans—with many patients presenting in late stages. Native American ocular care is also limited by the fragmented and often complete lack of healthcare in tribal communities. Approximately 70% of Native Americans live in urban areas, but only 25% are in counties served by Urban Indian Health programs funded through public law—contributing to access difficulties.

**Conclusions:** Addressing ocular health disparities in Native American communities requires a multifaceted approach. Ultimately, these solutions must be coordinated in collaboration with Native American community members and leaders.