

Nothing ominous about squint

DH NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE: An eye squint is often dismissed as a slightly embarrassing but harmless deformity. However, it was not taken lightly by doctors at a Continuous Medical Education (CME) seminar on 'Strabismus', organised by Narayana Nethralaya and Karnataka Ophthalmic Society on Sunday.

Doctors warned that Strabismus, or 'squint eye' in layman's terms, can trigger a condition called 'lazy eye' which can induce blindness in the affected eye. Worse still, it could result in loss of binocular coordination, because of which

the patient is unable to understand the depth or width of images. Nearly two per cent of the general population is believed to suffer from squint eye syndrome.

Even as the 'eye squint' is surrounded by many myths in India, with many communities regarding it as implying either 'good luck' or bad, doctors believe, clinically, that strabismus is an emergency situation requiring immediate medical intervention.

"Unlike popular perception, a squint can be cured if it receives timely treatment," said Dr Arun Samprathi of Narayana Nethralaya. Squints are usually congenital or sur-

face in early childhood; it may also occur among adults also, caused by paralyses of cranial nerves, or head injury or diabetes. Among children, it is found that hereditary factors play a major role in causing strabismus, Dr Samprathi revealed. "If a child has a family history of strabismus, he should be examined by a squint specialist. Even a small squint should not be ignored," he said.

The critical time for intervention are the first eight years among children. The squint can be treated using glasses, eye exercises or surgery, depending on the case, added Dr Samprathi.

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