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# Blindness - diabetes complication

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NHDD  
Knowledgebase ID: 000808 Version number: 1  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NHIMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
Effective date: 01-MAR-05  
Definition: Whether the individual has become legally blind in either or both eyes. Legally, blindness is defined as less than 6/60 vision in the better eye with glasses.  
Vision 6/60 is the ability to see only at 6 metres what the normal eye can see at 60 metres.  
Context: Diabetes mellitus specific data element.

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## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric  
Representational form: CODE  
Representation layout: N  
Minimum Size: 1  
Maximum Size: 1  
Data Domain: 1 Blindness - (< 6/60) occurred in either or both eyes in the last 12 months  
2 Blindness - (< 6/60) occurred in either or both eyes prior to the last 12 months  
3 Blindness - (< 6/60) occurred in one eye within 12 months and in the other eye prior to the last 12 months  
4 No blindness  
9 Not stated/ inadequately described  
Guide For Use: Blindness can be diagnosed in one eye within 12 months even though it has been previously diagnosed on the other eye (refers to code 3).  
Collection Methods: Ask the individual if he/she has been diagnosed as legally blind (<

6/60) in both or either eye. If so record whether it has occurred within or prior to the last 12 months.

Alternatively determine blindness from appropriate documentation obtained from an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Related metadata: relates to the data element Cataract - history version 1  
relates to the data element Ophthalmological assessment - outcome version 1  
relates to the data element Ophthalmoscopy - performed version 1  
relates to the data element Referred to ophthalmologist - diabetes mellitus version 1  
relates to the data element Visual acuity version 1  
relates to the data element Health professionals attended - diabetes mellitus version 1

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: National Diabetes Outcomes Quality Review Initiative (NDOQRIN) data dictionary.

Source Organisation: National Diabetes Data Working Group

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Comments: Patients with diabetes have an increased risk of developing several eye complications including retinopathy, cataract and glaucoma that lead to loss of vision.

Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness. Retinopathy is characterised by proliferation of the retina's blood vessels, which may project into the vitreous, causing vitreous haemorrhage, proliferation of fibrous tissue and retinal detachment. It is often accompanied by microaneurysms and macular oedema, which can express as blurred vision. The prevalence of retinopathy increases with increasing duration of diabetes. In the early stage, retinopathy is asymptomatic. Up to 20% of people with diabetes Type 2 have retinopathy at the time of diagnosis of diabetes. The cumulative prevalence of proliferation diabetic retinopathy and macular oedema after 20 years of type 1 diabetes is about 40%. The Diabetic Retinopathy Study Group showed that panretinal photocoagulation reduces the risk of severe loss of vision by 50%.

Although diabetes retinopathy cannot totally be prevented, better control of blood sugar level slows the onset and progression of retinopathy (The Diabetes Control and Complications Trial - DCCT).

Cataract and glaucoma are also associated diabetic eye problems

