

# Letters to the Editor

## Author reply

Dear Editor:

We read with great interest the letter by Professor Wiwanitkit on our recent paper<sup>1</sup> and we would like to thank him for his comments which are addressed below:

1. This study has assessed some of the important factors affecting on-time attendance rate, although we agree that there are other factors affecting this issue. However, it is noteworthy to mention that our study was based on two major projects registered by Tehran University of Medical Sciences (No 19952 and 20499), in which we knew that the parents in our study did not have significantly different educational status.
2. As we have mentioned in our conclusion, "Giving sufficient information about retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) to parents and educating them about this potentially blinding condition, along with making appointments for them and presence of facilities for free ROP screening exams, can increase the chance of on-time screening"; thus we never claimed that only education was the reason of the difference observed. However, our data shows that in group A, 12 parents missed their on-time examination due to lack of knowledge about ROP (11 due to not being aware about the importance of time in ROP and 1 due to the misconception that the baby is too small for such examination), while only 1 missed the exam because they "did not know where to seek for screening". The fact that none of these reasons were found in group B may lead us to guess that educating the parents played a more important role compared to other factors. Nevertheless, we are aware that the limitations of our study prevent us from direct conclusion.
3. Although mass media usually plays an important role in educating people about health issues, the issue of ROP is rarely discussed in our media. Thus we do not have any reason to believe that our participants were affected by any media.
4. This was not meant to be a pre and post knowledge evaluation. We actually assessed the effect of a practical tool [a piece of paper with health information plus a free appointment (the charge of ROP screening exam in university hospitals in Iran is not so much)] on the rate of on-time attendance.

Finally we believe that the results of our study can be useful in designing screening programs for ROP.

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## Reference

1. Mousavi SZ, Karkhaneh R, Roohipoor R, et al. Screening for retinopathy of prematurity: the role of educating the parents. *Iranian Journal of Ophthalmology* 2010;22(2):13-8.