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A Prospective Study of Prevalence, Risk Factors and Pattern of Retinopathy of Prematurity in Preterm Babies Attending Tertiary Care Hospital

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Abstract

Background: Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is a leading cause of preventable childhood blindness, particularly affecting very preterm and low birth weight infants. Understanding local prevalence, risk factors, and patterns is crucial for optimizing screening and management strategies.

Aim: To prospectively study the prevalence, risk factors, and clinical patterns of ROP in 100 preterm babies attending a tertiary care hospital over 18 months.

Methods: A prospective observational cohort study was conducted. Preterm infants (≤34 weeks GA or ≤1750g BW, or clinically unstable) admitted to the NICU were screened for ROP according to standard guidelines. Maternal, neonatal, and ROP-specific data were collected. Descriptive statistics and univariate/multivariate analysis (hypothetically) were used to determine prevalence, patterns, and risk factors.

Results: The overall prevalence of ROP was 40.0%. All infants developing ROP (40.0% of total cohort) required treatment. Mean gestational age (28.57 ± 2.25 weeks vs. 30.51 ± 1.89 weeks, $p<0.001$) and birth weight (981.58 ± 218.44g vs. 1141.47 ± 242.13g, $p<0.001$) were significantly lower in the ROP group. Prolonged oxygen therapy, mechanical ventilation, sepsis, and blood transfusions were associated with increased ROP risk. Zone II was the most common location (60.0% of ROP cases). (Anomalies in hypothetical stage distribution and plus disease noted in discussion).

Discussion: The ROP prevalence and identified risk factors (prematurity, low birth weight, oxygen, ventilation, sepsis) in this hypothetical cohort show some alignment with existing literature, though the 100% TROP rate and specific ROP patterns in the generated data warrant cautious interpretation and highlight the complexities of data simulation. Comparison with studies

by Lekha et al., Tapak et al., Hellström et al., and Shi et al. reveals both consistencies in major risk factors and differences in prevalence rates, likely due to population characteristics and study design.

Conclusion: This study underscores the significant burden of ROP in preterm infants. Lower gestational age, lower birth weight, and several neonatal morbidities are key risk factors. Vigilant screening and targeted interventions based on local risk profiles are essential. Further multi-center research is needed to refine understanding and management strategies.

Keywords: Retinopathy of Prematurity, Preterm Infants, Prevalence, Risk Factors, Tertiary Care Hospital, Prospective Study

Introduction

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) stands as a significant vasoproliferative disorder affecting the incompletely vascularized retina of preterm infants and is recognized globally as a leading cause of preventable childhood blindness[1,3]. The advent of advanced neonatal care has remarkably improved the survival rates of increasingly premature and low-birth-weight infants; however, this success has paradoxically led to a higher number of infants at risk for developing ROP [3]. The pathogenesis of ROP is complex, typically described in two phases: an initial phase of delayed physiological retinal vascular development (Phase 1), often influenced by relative hyperoxia and the loss of maternal-fetal interaction, followed by a phase of hypoxia-induced pathological neovascularization (Phase 2) that can lead to severe complications such as retinal detachment and irreversible vision loss if not timely and appropriately managed[3].

The incidence and severity of ROP are strongly correlated with lower gestational age (GA) and lower birth weight (BW)[3]. Studies have consistently shown that for every week decrease in GA or a 100-gram decrease in BW, the odds of developing ROP significantly increase [3]. For instance, a study focusing on extreme preterm (EPT: GA <28 weeks) and extreme low-birth-weight (ELBW: BW <1000 g) infants in India reported an ROP incidence of 87% and a treatment-requiring ROP (TROP) rate of 19.14%[1]. This highlights the substantial burden of ROP in this highly vulnerable population. While GA and BW are primary risk factors, numerous other perinatal factors have been implicated in the development and progression of ROP. These include the duration and concentration of oxygen therapy, duration of mechanical ventilation, sepsis, anemia, need for inotropic support, duration of total parenteral nutrition (TPN), bilirubin levels, and even maternal factors such as maternal age [1,2]. The interplay of these factors can be complex, and identifying specific predictors for the timing and severity of ROP remains an active area of research, with some studies employing advanced analytical methods like machine learning to unravel these relationships[2].

Early detection and timely intervention are crucial in preventing severe visual impairment from ROP. Screening guidelines, though varying slightly by region, generally target infants based on GA and BW thresholds, with serial examinations performed to monitor retinal vascular development and identify ROP at treatable stages[1,3]. Recent research has also explored the utility of various clinical and biochemical markers for the early prediction of ROP, aiming to identify high-risk infants even before clinical signs manifest. For example, a study by Shi et al. investigated the predictive value of clinical data on admission, such as systolic blood pressure, red blood cell count, hemoglobin, and bilirubin levels, finding that a combined indicator demonstrated good diagnostic value for ROP [4].

Despite advancements in understanding and managing ROP, variations in incidence, risk factor profiles, and

outcomes persist across different neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) and geographical regions[1,2,3]. These variations underscore the need for ongoing, region-specific research to better understand local patterns of ROP, identify prevalent risk factors within specific populations, and optimize screening and management strategies. Tertiary care hospitals, which manage a high volume of high-risk preterm infants, are uniquely positioned to contribute valuable data to this field. Therefore, this prospective study aims to investigate the prevalence, specific risk factors, and patterns of ROP in a cohort of 100 preterm babies attending a tertiary care hospital over an 18-month period. The findings from this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of ROP in our setting and inform local clinical practice for the prevention and management of this sight-threatening condition.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

The primary aim of this prospective study is to determine the prevalence, identify significant risk factors, and describe the clinical patterns of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) among preterm infants admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of a tertiary care hospital over an 18-month period.

Objectives

1. To determine the overall prevalence of any ROP and treatment-requiring ROP (TROP) in the study cohort of 100 preterm infants.
2. To identify and analyze maternal and neonatal risk factors associated with the development of ROP in this population. This will include, but not be limited to, gestational age, birth weight, duration of oxygen therapy, mechanical ventilation, sepsis, anemia, and other relevant perinatal variables.
3. To describe the clinical patterns of ROP observed, including the zone and stage of disease at presentation, the age at diagnosis, the progression of the disease, and the requirement for treatment (e.g., laser photocoagulation, anti-VEGF injections).
4. To document the short-term outcomes of ROP management in treated infants within the study period.
5. To compare the observed prevalence, risk factors, and patterns of ROP in our cohort with findings from other similar studies, particularly those conducted in comparable settings or populations.

Methodology

Study Design and Setting: This was a prospective observational cohort study conducted over a period of 18 months, from [Start Date - e.g., January 2023] to [End Date - e.g., June 2024], at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of [Name of Tertiary Care Hospital], a tertiary level care referral center. The NICU is equipped with advanced facilities for the management of preterm and critically ill neonates, including capabilities for invasive and non-invasive ventilation, parenteral nutrition, and comprehensive neonatal monitoring. The ophthalmology department at the hospital provides regular ROP screening services for at-risk infants admitted to the NICU.

Study Population and Sampling: A total of 100 preterm infants who met the inclusion criteria and were admitted to the NICU during the study period were consecutively enrolled in the study. Convenience sampling was employed, including all eligible infants admitted until the target sample size of 100 was reached.

Inclusion Criteria

1. All preterm infants with a gestational age (GA) of ≤ 34 weeks at birth.

2. Preterm infants with a birth weight (BW) of ≤ 1750 grams, irrespective of GA.
3. Selected larger preterm infants (GA > 34 weeks or BW > 1750 grams) with an unstable clinical course (e.g., prolonged oxygen therapy, sepsis, major surgery) deemed at risk for ROP by the attending neonatologist and ophthalmologist, based on established national/international guidelines.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Infants with major congenital ocular anomalies that would preclude ROP assessment (e.g., anophthalmia, severe microphthalmia, congenital cataracts obscuring fundal view).
2. Infants with chromosomal abnormalities or syndromes known to independently affect retinal vascular development in a manner distinct from ROP.
3. Infants who died before the first scheduled ROP screening examination.
4. Infants whose parents/guardians declined consent for participation in the study or for ROP screening.
5. Infants transferred to another facility before adequate ROP follow-up could be completed, unless complete records of their ROP status and outcome were obtainable.

Data Collection: Data for each enrolled infant were prospectively collected using a pre-designed, standardized data collection form. Maternal data collected included maternal age, parity, history of antenatal steroid administration, presence of maternal risk factors such as pre-eclampsia, chorioamnionitis, and gestational diabetes. Neonatal data included: gestational age (determined by last menstrual period and confirmed by early ultrasound or postnatal assessment like New Ballard Score), birth weight, sex, mode of delivery, Apgar scores, and details of resuscitation if any. Postnatal data collected throughout the NICU stay included: duration and type of respiratory support (oxygen therapy, CPAP, mechanical ventilation), episodes of sepsis (culture-proven or clinically suspected with inflammatory markers), necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH) grade, patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), need for blood transfusions (specifically packed red blood cells), use of medications such as inotropes and postnatal steroids, and nutritional details including duration of total parenteral nutrition (TPN) and time to reach full enteral feeds. Growth parameters, including weekly weight gain, were also monitored.

Retinopathy of Prematurity Screening and Classification: All enrolled infants underwent ROP screening examinations performed by an experienced pediatric ophthalmologist. Screening was initiated at 4 weeks of postnatal age or at 31-32 weeks postmenstrual age (PMA), whichever was later, in accordance with established international and national guidelines (e.g., American Academy of Pediatrics, Royal College of Ophthalmologists, or relevant national guidelines). Pupil dilation was achieved using a combination of tropicamide (0.5% or 1%) and phenylephrine (2.5%) eye drops. Fundus examination was performed using an indirect ophthalmoscope with a 20D or 28D lens and a scleral depressor. Findings were documented according to the International Classification of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ICROP) guidelines, detailing the zone of involvement, stage of ROP, presence of plus disease, and aggressive posterior ROP (APROP). Follow-up examinations were scheduled based on the initial findings, typically every 1-2 weeks for immature retina or mild ROP, and more frequently (every few days to 1 week) for more severe ROP or rapidly progressing disease, until the retina was fully vascularized or ROP regressed or was treated.

Treatment, primarily laser photocoagulation or intravitreal anti-VEGF injections, was administered for Type 1 ROP (Zone I, any stage ROP with plus disease; Zone I, stage 3 ROP with or without plus disease; Zone II, stage 2 or 3 ROP with plus disease) or APROP, as per ETROP study recommendations and current best practices.

Ethical Considerations: The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of [Name of Tertiary Care Hospital/Institution, with IEC approval number]. Written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of each infant prior to enrollment in the study and before any study-specific procedures. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Confidentiality of patient data was maintained throughout the study by using anonymized codes for data analysis.

Statistical Analysis Plan: Data were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and subsequently analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version [e.g., 26.0] or a similar statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations (SD), medians, interquartile ranges (IQR), frequencies, and percentages, will be used to summarize baseline maternal and neonatal characteristics and the prevalence and patterns of ROP. To identify risk factors for ROP, univariate analysis (Chi-square test or Fisher's exact test for categorical variables, and Student's t-test or Mann-Whitney U test for continuous variables) will be performed to compare infants who developed ROP with those who did not. Variables found to be significant ($p < 0.1$) in the univariate analysis, along with clinically important variables, will be included in a multivariate logistic regression model to identify independent predictors of ROP. Odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) will be calculated. A p-value of < 0.05 will be considered statistically significant for all inferential analyses.

Results

I. Baseline Maternal and Neonatal Characteristics

A total of 100 preterm infants were included in this prospective study. The baseline maternal and neonatal characteristics of the study population are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Baseline Maternal and Neonatal Characteristics (n=100)

Characteristics	Value (Mean ± SD or n (%))
Maternal Characteristics	
Maternal Age (years)	30.20 ± 5.84
Antenatal Steroids (Yes)	63 (63%)
Maternal Pre-eclampsia (Yes)	12 (12%)
Maternal Chorioamnionitis (Yes)	6 (6%)
Maternal GDM (Yes)	11 (11%)
Neonatal Characteristics	
Gestational Age (weeks)	29.73 ± 2.24

Characteristics	Value (Mean ± SD or n (%))
Birth Weight (grams)	1077.51 ± 244.82
Sex (Male)	56 (56%)
Multiple Gestation	24 (24%)
Mode of Delivery (SVD/LSCS)	40/60 (40%/60%)
Apgar Score at 1 min	5.50 ± 1.79
Apgar Score at 5 min	7.16 ± 1.44

II. Prevalence and Clinical Pattern of Retinopathy of Prematurity

Out of the 100 infants screened, 40 (40.0%) developed some stage of ROP. Treatment-requiring ROP (TROP) was observed in 40 infants, accounting for 40.0% of the total cohort and 100.0% of those who developed ROP. The clinical patterns of ROP, including zone, stage, and presence of plus disease among infants who developed ROP, are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Clinical Characteristics of ROP among Affected Infants (n=40)

Characteristics	Value (Mean ± SD or n (%))
Age at ROP Diagnosis (PMA, weeks)	34.07 ± 1.73
ROP Zone Distribution	
Zone I	5 (12.5%)
Zone II	24 (60.0%)
Zone III	11 (27.5%)
Max ROP Stage Distribution	
Stage 1	0 (0.0%)
Stage 2	0 (0.0%)
Stage 3	0 (0.0%)
Stage 4a	0 (0.0%)
Stage 4b	2 (5.0%)
Stage 5	0 (0.0%)
APROP	0 (0.0%)
Plus Disease (Yes)	0 (0.0%)
Treatment Administered (n=40)	
Laser Photocoagulation	0 (0.0% of treated)
Anti-VEGF Injection	0 (0.0% of treated)
Both Laser and Anti-VEGF	0 (0.0% of treated)

III. Univariate Analysis of Risk Factors for ROP Development

Table 3 presents the comparison of various maternal and neonatal factors between infants who developed ROP and those who did not. (Note: Full multivariate logistic regression is beyond this automated generation but would typically follow in a complete study).

Table 3: Comparison of Potential Risk Factors between ROP and No-ROP Groups

Factor	ROP Group (n=40) (Mean ± SD or n (%))	No-ROP Group (n=60) (Mean ± SD or n (%))	P-value (Illustrative)
Gestational Age (weeks)	28.57 ± 2.25	30.51 ± 1.89	<0.001
Birth Weight (grams)	981.58 ± 218.44	1141.47 ± 242.13	<0.001
Oxygen Therapy Duration (days)	26.52 ± 13.83	18.27 ± 12.40	<0.01
Mech. Ventilation Duration (days)	5.33 ± 6.33	2.12 ± 3.99	<0.01
Sepsis (Yes)	22 (55.0%)	19 (31.7%)	<0.05
Blood Transfusions (count)	2.10 ± 1.32	1.20 ± 1.10	<0.05

Further analysis would typically involve multivariate logistic regression to identify independent risk factors after adjusting for confounders. For the purpose of this hypothetical generation, we present illustrative univariate comparisons suggesting that lower gestational age, lower birth weight, longer duration of oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation, presence of sepsis, and higher number of blood transfusions were associated with an increased risk of ROP development.

IV. Short-term Outcomes of ROP Management

Among the 40 infants who received treatment for ROP, the short-term outcomes were as follows (Table 4):

Table 4: Short-term Outcomes of Treated ROP (n=40)

Outcome Category	Number of Infants	Percentage (%)
Regressed with treatment	0	0.0
Persisted despite treatment	3	7.5

(Note: Outcomes for spontaneously resolved ROP are not included in this treatment outcome table but were part of overall ROP outcome assessment.)

Discussion

This prospective study aimed to determine the prevalence, risk factors, and clinical patterns of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) in a cohort of 100 preterm infants at a tertiary care hospital. Our findings indicate an overall ROP prevalence of 40.0%, with all these cases (40.0% of the total cohort) requiring treatment (TROP). The mean gestational age and birth weight of infants who developed ROP were significantly lower than those who did not. Additionally, factors such as prolonged oxygen therapy, mechanical ventilation, sepsis, and a higher number of blood transfusions were associated with an increased risk of ROP in our hypothetical cohort.

The observed ROP prevalence of 40.0% in our study population, with a TROP rate of 40.0% (representing 100% of those with ROP in this hypothetical dataset), presents a notable finding. This prevalence is lower than the 87% ROP incidence reported by Lekha et al.[1] in a high-risk Indian cohort of extreme preterm (EPT) and extreme low-birth-weight (ELBW) infants, where TROP was 19.14%. The difference in overall ROP prevalence could be attributed to variations in the baseline characteristics of the study populations, as our cohort included infants up to 34 weeks GA and 1750g, potentially a less premature group overall compared to the EPT/ELBW focus of Lekha et al.[1]. However, the finding that all ROP cases in our hypothetical data required treatment is unusually high and differs from most literature where TROP is a subset of overall ROP. For instance, Hellström et al.[3] in their review noted variable incidences worldwide, often influenced by survival rates of extremely premature infants and neonatal care practices. The high TROP rate in our results might reflect a higher severity threshold for ROP diagnosis in the hypothetical dataset or a population with more severe disease, though the generated ROP stage distribution in Table 2 (showing predominantly Zone II/III and no Stage 1 or 2, and very few severe stages) does not fully support this, indicating a possible anomaly in the hypothetical data generation regarding treatment criteria or recording. Shi et al.[4] reported that 65.8% of infants in their background literature had some degree of ROP, with higher rates in lower birth weight categories, which is a broader range than our specific cohort finding but aligns with the general trend.

Risk Factors for ROP: Our univariate analysis identified lower gestational age, lower birth weight, longer duration of oxygen therapy, prolonged mechanical ventilation, sepsis, and increased number of blood transfusions as significant risk factors for ROP. These findings are largely consistent with established literature. Hellström et al.[3] emphasized GA and BW as the strongest risk factors, a point strongly corroborated by our results. The association with oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation is also well-documented[2,3], reflecting the delicate balance required in oxygen administration to premature infants. Lekha et al.[1] identified inotropic support and anemia as risk factors in their EPT/ELBW cohort; while our dataset included blood transfusions (often linked to anemia), inotropic support was not explicitly analyzed as a primary variable in our generated results tables, but sepsis (which might necessitate inotropes) was significant. Tapak et al.[2], using a machine learning approach in an Iranian cohort, identified a broader set of predictors including duration of ventilation, GA, oxygen duration, bilirubin levels, antibiotic duration, and TPN duration. Our findings on ventilation, GA, and oxygen align with this. The significance of sepsis in our study also resonates with the known impact of inflammation on ROP development[3]. The study by Shi et al.[4] focused on early predictive markers on admission, such as SBP, RBC, HGB, and bilirubin, suggesting that baseline physiological parameters can indicate ROP risk, which complements our findings on postnatal risk factors.

Clinical Patterns of ROP: In our hypothetical cohort of 40 infants with ROP, the mean age at diagnosis was approximately 34 weeks postmenstrual age (PMA). The distribution showed a predominance of Zone II (60.0%) and Zone III (27.5%) involvement, with fewer cases in Zone I (12.5%). The stage distribution in our results (Table 2) appears skewed, with no Stage 1 or 2 ROP recorded, and only a small number of Stage 4b cases, which is atypical for a general ROP cohort where milder stages are usually more common. This might be a

limitation of the hypothetical data generation. Plus disease was not recorded as present in any ROP cases in our generated Table 2, which is also unusual, especially if 100% of ROP cases were deemed TROP, as plus disease is a key indicator for treatment[3]. As noted, all 40 ROP cases were classified as TROP, but specific treatments (Laser, Anti-VEGF) were not assigned in the generated Table 2, and Table 4 indicated that of these 40 treated infants, a small number (7.5%) had persisted disease despite treatment. This high TROP rate, coupled with the lack of milder stages and plus disease in the descriptive tables, suggests a need for cautious interpretation of the ROP pattern data from this hypothetical cohort and points to potential inconsistencies in the dataset generation logic for ROP severity and treatment assignment that would need refinement in a real study.

Strengths and Limitations: The prospective design outlined in the methodology is a strength, allowing for systematic data collection. The inclusion of 100 patients provides a reasonable sample size for a single-center study. However, this discussion is based on a hypothetically generated dataset, which, despite attempts to mirror real-world scenarios, has shown some internal inconsistencies (e.g., TROP rates, stage distribution, plus disease, and treatment details). These inconsistencies are a major limitation of the current *results* being discussed. In a real study, such data would require rigorous validation and cleaning. Furthermore, the risk factor analysis presented is primarily univariate; a comprehensive multivariate logistic regression, as mentioned in the methodology, would be essential to identify independent risk factors while controlling for confounders. The single-center nature of the proposed study might limit the generalizability of findings to other populations or healthcare settings with different neonatal care practices or patient demographics. The 18-month duration is adequate for patient accrual but follow-up for long-term visual outcomes was not part of the immediate objectives.

Implications and Future Directions: Despite the hypothetical nature of the data, the exercise underscores the importance of continued surveillance and research into ROP. If the trends observed (lower GA, BW, prolonged oxygen, sepsis as risk factors) were confirmed in a real-world study at the tertiary care center, it would reinforce the need for meticulous adherence to oxygen titration protocols, stringent infection control measures, and potentially targeted nutritional strategies as suggested by Hellström et al.[3]. The identification of specific local risk factor profiles can help in developing targeted screening strategies or risk stratification models, perhaps incorporating early clinical indicators as explored by Shi et al.[4] or advanced analytical methods like those used by Tapak et al.[2]. Future research should focus on multi-center studies to enhance generalizability, incorporate long-term visual and neurodevelopmental outcomes, and further investigate the complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors in ROP pathogenesis. The inconsistencies in the current hypothetical dataset also highlight the critical importance of robust data generation, management, and statistical analysis in actual clinical research.

In conclusion, this discussion, based on a hypothetical prospective study, reiterates the multifactorial nature of ROP and the critical role of prematurity and associated neonatal morbidities. While the generated data showed some plausible trends in risk factors, anomalies in the prevalence and patterns of ROP severity and treatment highlight the challenges of data simulation and the rigor required in actual clinical studies. Continuous quality improvement initiatives in neonatal care, informed by

ongoing research, are paramount in the global effort to reduce the burden of ROP-related blindness.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion

This prospective study, based on a hypothetical cohort of 100 preterm infants in a tertiary care setting, found an overall Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) prevalence of 40.0%. All infants identified with ROP in this dataset were deemed to require treatment. Key risk factors associated with ROP development in this simulated cohort included lower gestational age, lower birth weight, prolonged oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation, the presence of sepsis, and a higher number of blood transfusions. While these findings align broadly with established knowledge on ROP, the specific patterns of ROP severity and the 100% treatment rate among ROP cases in the hypothetical data presented some anomalies that underscore the complexities of clinical research and data interpretation.

Implications for Clinical Practice

The findings from this hypothetical study, if mirrored in real-world local data, would reinforce the critical importance of vigilant ROP screening programs in tertiary care NICUs, particularly for the most vulnerable very low birth weight and extremely preterm infants. Emphasis should continue to be placed on optimizing neonatal care practices aimed at mitigating known risk factors. This includes judicious oxygen administration, stringent infection control protocols to reduce sepsis rates, strategies to minimize the need for blood transfusions, and comprehensive nutritional support to promote healthy growth and development, which can indirectly influence ROP risk. Early identification of high-risk infants, potentially through a combination of established criteria and novel predictive markers, could allow for more targeted surveillance and timely intervention, ultimately aiming to reduce the incidence of severe ROP and adverse visual outcomes.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should focus on larger, multi-center prospective studies to provide more generalizable data on ROP prevalence, risk factors, and outcomes in diverse populations. There is a continuing need to refine risk prediction models for ROP, possibly incorporating newer biomarkers or advanced analytical techniques like machine learning, to better identify infants at highest risk. Further investigation into the long-term visual and neurodevelopmental outcomes of infants with different stages of ROP, and following various treatment modalities, is crucial. Research into optimal, individualized oxygen and nutritional management strategies for preterm infants to prevent ROP while ensuring overall well-being remains a priority. Additionally, comparative effectiveness research on different treatment modalities for ROP, especially for more severe or atypical forms, will continue to inform clinical guidelines. Finally, qualitative research exploring parental experiences and decision-making related to ROP screening and treatment could provide valuable insights for improving family-centered care.

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