

# Retinopathy of Prematurity: An Ophthalmic Concern in Albanian Neonatal Care – Insights and National Perspective

Eglantina Bulica<sup>1\*</sup>, Vilma Mema<sup>2</sup>, Alketa Tandili<sup>2</sup>, Ilir Arapi<sup>2</sup>, Spiro Dama<sup>3</sup>, Amarilda Hysenshahaj<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Polyclinic of Specialties Nr.1, Tirana, Albania

<sup>2</sup> University Hospital Center Mother Tereza, Tirana, Albania

<sup>3</sup> Gynecological Obstetric University Hospital Mbreteresha Geraldine, Tirana, Albania

<sup>4</sup> Public Health Institute, Tirana, Albania

---

## Abstract

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is a significant preventable cause of childhood blindness worldwide, especially among premature infants who require care in neonatal intensive care units especially under oxygen therapy. In Albania, as neonatal services have evolved, more preterm infants survive, leading to a corresponding increase in the incidence of retinopathy of prematurity. Despite the growing incidence, there is still no national data that reflect the real situation of this problem in Albania.

The primary goal of this review is to provide a comprehensive and accessible overview of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), including its pathogenesis, risk factors, classification, current screening and treatment approaches, and long-

term consequences for affected children. Beyond summarizing the international evidence, we aim to draw attention to the lack of national data and published evidence regarding ROP in Albania and highlight the initiation of the country's first national observational study on ROP, supported by the National Agency of Science and Innovation (NASRI). This initiative is expected to generate local evidence and inform future strategies.

Finally, this review calls the urgent development of national protocols and the establishment of a more coordinated system of care to effectively prevent blindness from ROP in Albania.

**Keywords:** Albania, Neonatal Care, Premature  
Infants, Retinopathy of Prematurity, ROP  
Screening