UTSS Official Summary of Albinism

Albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited difference occurring in both genders regardless of ethnicity, in all countries of the world. BOTH the father and mother must carry the gene for it to be passed on even if they do not have albinism themselves. The condition results in a lack of pigmentation in the hair, skin and eyes, causing vulnerability to sun exposure and bright light. Almost all people with albinism are visually impaired, with the majority being classified as “legally blind”. While numbers vary widely and no comprehensive studies have been conducted, it is reported that in North America and Europe, an estimate of 1 in every 17,000 to 20,000 people have albinism. In Africa it is estimated that 1 in every 5,000 to 15,000 people have albinism with selected populations having estimates as high as 1 in 1,000. In Tanzania where UTSS is based, the prevalence of albinism is estimated to be 1 in 1,400 people being affected.