An audit on the referral pathways used for optic disc haemorrhages identified in the Birmingham and Black Country Diabetic Eye Screening Programme

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Aim: Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) screening provides opportunistic identification of other conditions such as glaucoma. The Birmingham and Black Country DR Screening (BBCDRS) programme currently grade optic disc haemorrhage (ODH) as R1 and refer for consideration of eye clinic assessment. This audit evaluates the patient pathways in the BBCDRS programme to hospital eye service (HES).

Method: A retrospective analysis of 119 patients who presented with ODH at DR screening in the BBCDRS programme between June 2009 and March 2010 was performed. Patients’ age ranged between 39-91 years. The outcome of the patient pathway and care was assessed at one year follow up.

Results: Of the 119 patients, 42 (35%) were not referred and continued on annual screening. 77 (65%) patients were referred to HES for assessment, of whom 34 (44%) did not have glaucoma assessment but of the 43 who did, 11 (26%) were diagnosed with glaucoma.

One year follow up of the 77 referred patients revealed that in 45(57%) cases the ODH had resolved, in 10(13%) patients the ODH were still present. 15(21%) patients were still under HES hence digital retinal photos were not available for assessment. 6(8%) (aged 71-91 years) had died within the year.

Conclusions: In the BBCDRS programme there is inconsistency in referral patterns between referral outcome graders. Consequently 44% of diabetic patients with ODH were not assessed for possible glaucoma even though they were referred.

It can be concluded that patients who present with ODH need to be referred for further assessment ideally to a Glaucoma Clinic.