Proliferative diabetic retinopathy (R3) referrals from the digital diabetic retinopathy screening program: Urgency of appointment in the hospital eye service achieved and needed?

T. Kebede¹, P. Amrelia¹, H. Wharton¹, A. Wright¹, P.M. Dodson¹², J.M. Gibson¹²

Aims

To assess the clinical characteristics and outcomes of patients identified with proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR) referred from the screening program to the hospital eye services (HES).

Methods

A retrospective analysis of urgently referred PDR cases to Birmingham Heartlands HES from August 2008 until July 2010.

Results

130 urgent diabetic retinopathy referrals were made and reviewed. 103 (68% male, 80% type 2 diabetes) were referred for PDR with a mean age of 59 years, mean diabetes duration of 17.8 years. 69% were on insulin treatment at the time of the screening, with mean HbA1c of 10.4% (range 5.7 to 16.5%). 65% of the patients were offered appointments at HES within two weeks after referral from the screening.

50.5% of the patients were seen in the HES within 2 weeks, 22 and 16% were seen 2-4 and 4-8 weeks after referral respectively. 6 patients never attended ophthalmology examination during the two years of review.

Of all the attendees, 56% were booked for pan retinal photocoagulation (PRP) & 9 (9.3%) for macular laser respectively on their 1st HES visit. 75% of the patients were newly diagnosed PDR and 26 had previous PRP laser but lost to follow up. 63 patients (66%) received either PRP or macular laser treatment (85.7% of which is PRP). 63% of the PRP treatment was...

¹ Departments of Ophthalmology and Diabetes, Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Centre, Birmingham Heartlands Hospital – United Kingdom
² School of Life and Health Sciences, Aston University, Birmingham – United Kingdom
performed within a month of first HES attendance. Retinopathy grading discrepancy between the screening program and HES was noted in 20% (21 patients).

**Conclusion**

This data suggests that the digital screening programme is appropriately identifying high risk patients with PDR with timely PRP laser treatment in the majority of patients. Failsafe policies and procedures are in place to track appointment attendance to help prevent patients from getting lost to follow up. The audit raises the issue of grading discrepancies between the ophthalmology and screening service.

For more information please contact Rebecca Leigh
rebecca.leigh@heartofengland.nhs.uk