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

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Introduction

- Patients who present with proliferative diabetic retinopathy (R3) at diabetic eye screening are at increased risk of visual loss.
- In order to minimise harm the NHS Diabetic Eye Screening Programme (DESP) recommend that the achievable standard between the time of notification of R3 and consultation should be 95% <2 weeks.
- Purpose of the audit is to assess the clinical characteristics and outcomes of the patients identified with R3 referred from the local DESP to the hospital eye services (HES).

Method

- This was a retrospective analysis of urgently referred R3 cases to Birmingham Heartlands HES from August 2008 until July 2010.

Results

- A total of 130 urgent referral were made but only 103 reviewed in detail. (130 referral-21 patients with grading discrepancy – 6 Patients did not attend = 103 patients)
- 67 (65%) patients were offered appointments at HES within 2 weeks.

Conclusion

- These data suggests that the digital screening programme is appropriately identifying high-risk patients with R3 and with timely PRP laser treatment in the majority of patients.
- Raised concern over patients lost to follow-up (hence fail-safe tracking of appointments attendance), and review of grading discrepancies between the ophthalmology and screening services.

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**Fig:1 Characteristics of referred R3 patients**

**Fig:2 Time between notification of R3 and consultation.**

**Fig:3 Patients booked for laser treatment at first HES appointment.**