Evaluating the accuracy of referrals to the Southampton fast-track AMD clinic

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Background

Objectives:

1. What proportion of patients referred to the fast-track neovascular AMD (nAMD) clinic received a diagnosis of nAMD?
2. What factors in the referral are associated with a diagnosis of nAMD?
3. What is the length of time from referral to clinic appointment and first intravitreal injection?

Methods

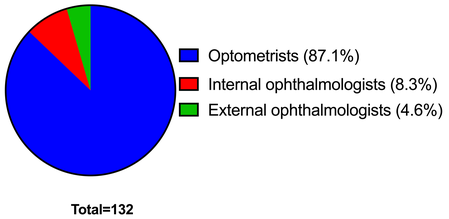
This was a retrospective evaluation of 132 eyes from 117 patients referred to the fast-track nAMD clinic. Pertinent data was extracted from referral letters and online records.

The pertinent data collated included:

1. Dates of referral, clinic appointment, and intravitreal injection
2. Data from referral letter: Visual acuity, reported symptoms, any signs detected, and investigations prior to referral
3. Final diagnosis at clinic appointment

Results

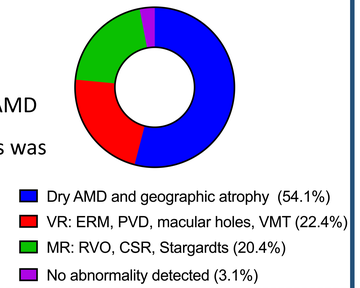
Referrer details



Final Diagnosis

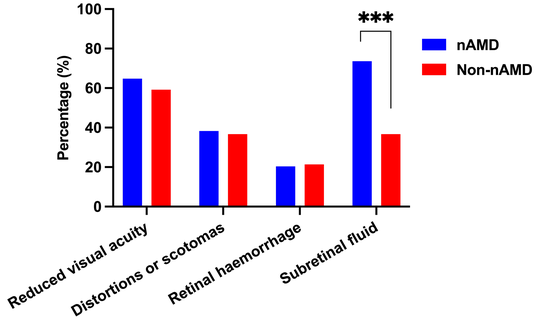
Of the 132 eyes referred:

- **25.8%** (n=34) were diagnosed with nAMD
- **74.2%** (n=98): an alternative diagnosis was made (Non-nAMD)



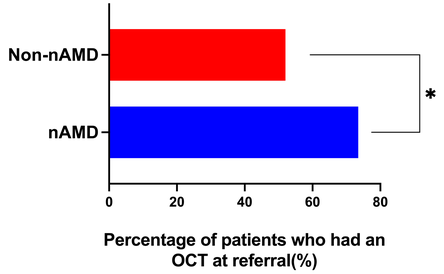
Symptoms and signs reported in referrals

- Reduced visual acuity, distortions, scotomas, and retinal haemorrhages were reported in a similar proportion of eyes in both groups.
- 73.5% of eyes that were diagnosed with nAMD had subretinal fluid reported in the referral letter



OCT prior to referral

- Before referral, OCT was conducted in 57.6% (n=76) of eyes.
- This was 73.5% (n=25) and 52% (n=51) in the nAMD and non-nAMD groups, respectively. OCT at referral is significantly associated with a diagnosis of nAMD (p=0.0431).
- All patients with subretinal fluid reported underwent OCT imaging. None were identified through examination alone.



Time from referral to clinic appointment and injection

NICE recommends that treatment is initiated within 14 days of referral for those with a new diagnosis of nAMD

The median time (days) from:

- Referral to clinic appointment: 19 days (IQR 15— 29)
- Referral to the first injection: 38 days (IQR 27 – 51)
- Clinic appointment to first injection: 17 days (IQR 5 – 25)

3.1% (n=1) of eyes diagnosed with nAMD received intravitreal injections within 14 days

Conclusions

- 25.8% of referrals result in a diagnosis of neovascular AMD.
- Report of subretinal fluid on referral letter is significantly associated with a final diagnosis of nAMD.
- Patients who had an OCT before referral were more likely to be diagnosed with nAMD. However, since all patients with SRF had an OCT, this is potentially a confounder.
- Nearly all patients with neovascular AMD received intravitreal injections outside the recommended timeframe.