Assessing utility and efficiency of the Minor Eye Conditions Service in participants registered to The Spitalfields Practice, London

Abdalla Ali, Ali Istanaksai, Khaled Jama, Eesa Siddiqui, Kobir Ahmed

The ‘Minor Eye Condition Service (MECS) is a service funded by the NHS that helps to provide assessment and care of minor medical eye conditions, provided by local optometrists, to ease the burden on primary care and secondary ophthalmological services.

Objective: To evaluate the utility and outcomes of MECS consultations in patients registered to The Spitalfields Practice (London) and whether the use of this service in primary care can be optimised.

Methods: The EMIS records of patients registered to The Spitalfields Group Practice were reviewed for all MECS consultation summaries received from participating optometrists (in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets) for a 12-month period (October 2023 – September 2024). A retrospective cohort study was done on all matching records in this period, with the source of referral, referral indication (according to inclusion criteria set by the MECS service) and management outcomes recorded.

Conclusions: Although the sample size was small, the high percentage of MECS cases requiring no follow-up highlights the service's effectiveness in managing conditions within its inclusion criteria. Gauging the true proportions of the sources of referral proved difficult due to the inconsistent documentation from the MECS service providers. However, the relatively low number of referrals from the NHS 111 service recorded, compared to the higher proportion from GPs, suggests that the service may be underutilised, especially considering that patients using the NHS 111 service for minor medical eye conditions can often be redirected to primary care for further assessment.

Results:







