Certification of Vision impairment: Analysis of Trends within Eye Care Centres in Wales between 2019 and 2024

Michelle Lee[1], Raghu Ram[2], Sue Brooks[2]
[1]Cardiff University Medical School, [2]Royal Glamorgan Hospital

Background

- Certification of Vision Impairment (CVI) is a form that enables visually impaired people to be registered for special benefits and support.
- In 2007, Wales introduced its own version of the CVI form, called the CVIW, which provides a more holistic and comprehensive evaluation of visual impairment[1].
- Visual acuity and field are accessed by a consultant ophthalmologist and patients are categorised as 'Sight Impaired' (SI) or 'Severely Sight Impaired' (SSI) based on specific criteria.
- CVI provides important epidemiological information and are used as indicators for preventable sight loss in UK.

Aims

- To analyse recent CVI trends across multiple hospital in the Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board, Wales from 2019 to 2024.
- To identify risk factors that influence CVI rates in multiple eye care centres.

Methods

- Between 1 February 2019 and 30 May 2024, data from CVIW forms completed in 4 hospitals within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Wales were obtained.
- Details about each patient's age, gender, postcode of residence, date of completion of CVIW form, diagnosis, and status of visual impairment (SI or SSI) were collated by an Eye Care Liaison Officer and consultant ophthalmologist.
- Impact of socioeconomic factors on visual loss was measured using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 which assessed income, employment, health and many more[2,3].
- Areas were ranked by deciles of 1 (most deprived) to 10 (least deprived) and compared to CVI rates.

Conclusion

- An increment of certifications is to be expected due to an ageing and growing population. Our study shows no significant changes in CVI rates which may reflect undiagnosed eye conditions or refusal of certification.
- AMD remains the leading cause of CVI certifications, followed by glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy/ maculopathy.
- Visual impairments predominantly affect the older age groups.
- Socioeconomic factors play an important role in sight loss.
- Addressing health inequalities, fast track access to macular clinics and engaging primary care optometrists will help to reduce the burden of sight loss.

Results

- A total of 668 CVIW forms were completed, consisting of 340 SI and 328 SSI certifications.
- There were no significant changes in certification rates between 2019 and 2024. Number of CVIs was highest in 2019 and lowest was in 2020, most likely due to the lockdown of eye care services during the COVID-19 pandemic as reported by numerous studies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland[4,5].
- In the SI group, common causes of CVI were AMD (55%), glaucoma (12%), diabetic retinopathy/ maculopathy (5%) and cardiovascular disease (5%) (Diagram 1).
- In the SSI group, largest category was AMD (53%), followed by glaucoma (14%), optic atrophy (6%) and diabetic retinopathy/ maculopathy (6%) (Diagram 2).
- Mean age was 76.7 years old. Largest category of certified patients were 80-89 years old (35%). 42% were male and 58% were female.
- The largest category of certified patients lived in the most deprived areas within Wales (first decile), followed by the third and fourth deciles (Diagram 3).
- More than half of certified patients live in the most deprived areas in Wales.

Main Causes of Sight Impaired Certification

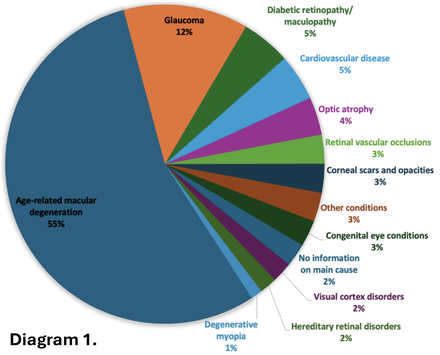


Diagram 1.

Main Causes of Severely Sight Impaired Certification

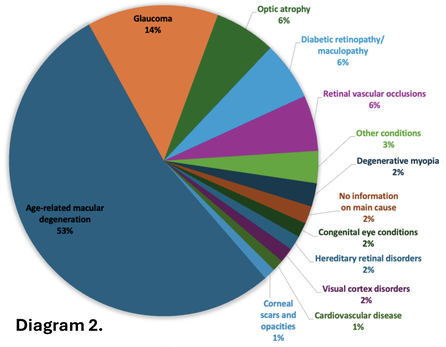
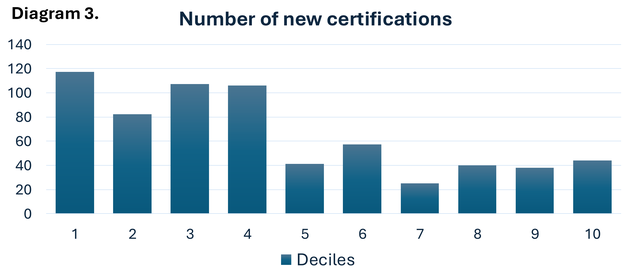


Diagram 2.

Diagram 3.



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