Retinal Disease, Depression & Vision Loss:
Conversations To Make A Difference

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COPE COURSE: 47718-LV 1 HOUR

Retinal Disease Causes Vision Loss

Retinal Disease Causes Vision Loss

Macular Degeneration:  
- The number 1 cause of vision loss among seniors.  
- Affects approximately 9% of global population.  
- Affects 8% of those over 75 years old.  
- Projected by 2020 over 196 million; by 2040 over 288 million.  
- There is no cure for macular degeneration.  
- The most common negative side effect of the vision loss is functional disability.

Who is this Palmer guy?  
ICD 1994
Private, commercial and contract practice 1994-present
LOW VISION EXPERIENCE  
Independent study with Richard Shuldiner, OD, FAAO-Low Vision Diplomate and founder of International Academy of Low Vision Specialists (IALVS) 2008
Founded, Low Vision Restoration, LLC 2008-present
Average 3 low vision exams per month  
No Third Party payments  
No Office  
No Employees  
Fellow, International Academy of Low Vision Specialists (IALVS) 2008-present

What Causes Upset?  
1. UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS  
2. THWARTED INTENTIONS  
3. UNDELIVERED COMMUNICATIONS

Reactions when Upset  
1. SHIFT IN REALITY  
2. DECREASE IN AFFINITY  
3. DECREASE IN COMMUNICATION

Retinal Disease Causes Vision Loss

What Do Patients Expect:  
New Glasses. They always worked before!

What Do Patients Hear from the Doctor:  
"You're going blind. There is no cure. New glasses won't make a difference. There's nothing more that can be done! We cannot predict when or if you will lose vision!"

Macular Degeneration: It's appearance is usually SUDDEN!
The Facts According to This Landmark Study

Among older adults with visual impairment, those with AMD seem to be particularly at risk for depression compared to those with other eye diseases. Clinically significant sub-threshold symptoms of depression have been found in approximately 33% of visually impaired older adults, which is approximately twice as high as the lifetime prevalence rates in the normally sighted general older population.

Agoraphobia (4.2%) and social phobia (2.4%) were particularly prevalent among those with visual impairment. Thus, as the authors conclude, visually impaired older adults are more prone to develop anxiety disorders related to specific places or social situations such as being on a bus or eating at a restaurant.

Among those with AMD, prevalence of anxiety is from 10–30%.

Fear of places and situations that might cause panic, helplessness, or embarrassment.

Because significant numbers of older adults with AMD experience depression and anxiety, both constitute major public health problems in this population.

Anxiety

Noun

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

Desire to do something, typically accompanied by unease.

Psychiatry

A nervous disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks.

Depression

Noun

Feelings of severe despondency and dejection.

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think, and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. People with depression have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes feel as if life isn’t worth living.
Vision Loss causes Anxiety & Depression,

MECHANISMS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ANXIETY & DEPRESSION
A strong relationship exists between a loss of functional capacity and depression. A vicious cycle develops as depression lowers function, which in turn, increases depression.
A strong relationship also exists between basic problem solving skills and depression. The well tested repertoire of skills no longer works.
A poor future outlook combined with the potential for sudden and/or unpredictable vision loss is difficult to deal with.

Clinical Ophthalmology. 2016. 10:55–63

Vision Loss causes Anxiety & Depression,

INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN AMD PATIENTS
Low vision rehabilitation aims to reduce vision related disability by maximizing residual vision through training in the use of optical and assistive devices, orientation and mobility skills, and general compensatory strategies.
To the extent that depression in AMD results from activity restrictions, and that low vision rehabilitation fosters activity reengagement, low vision rehabilitation might have an ‘antidepressant’ effect. It may even ward off feelings of anxiety.

Clinical Ophthalmology. 2016. 10:55–63

Vision Loss causes Anxiety & Depression,

INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN AMD PATIENTS
In the case of depression, some studies show improvement in depression following standard low vision treatment, while others do not.
There are no studies investigating the effects of low vision rehabilitation in reducing anxiety in AMD patients.

Clinical Ophthalmology. 2016. 10:55–63

Vision Loss causes Anxiety & Depression,

INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN AMD PATIENTS
Mixed findings notwithstanding, it must be noted that patients with depression may be less likely to utilize low vision services.

THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Clinical Ophthalmology. 2016. 10:55–63

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR A VISION LOSS PATIENT.

Most Vision Loss Patients can lead independent lives with the right care.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR A VISION LOSS PATIENT.

The Right Care is LOW VISION CARE
The more you know, the more you can relieve the patient’s anxiety/upset.

You do not have to offer Low Vision Care. You just have to tell patients that help is available. THERE IS LIFE AFTER VISION LOSS!

There is life after vision loss!

Understanding Low Vision Care
Questions to consider

• What is Low Vision?
• What possibilities become available through a low vision service?
• When is referral a good option for the vision loss patient?
• Where are low vision resources in my community?
• How do I make a low vision referral without losing my patient?

Understanding Low Vision Care
Questions to consider

Low Vision is fully corrected vision which is insufficient to do what YOU want to do.

A LOW VISION PATIENT IS SOMEONE WHO CANNOT DO WHAT THEY WANT TO DO WITH THE LEVEL OF VISION THEY HAVE.

A LOW VISION PATIENT IS SOMEONE WHO HAS LOST FUNCTION.

Understanding Low Vision Care
Questions to consider

You have a low vision patient when they say they have difficulty with or cannot:
read - write - drive - sew - do crafts - see TV recognize faces - work on computer enjoy theater - play cards - and more.....

DUE TO VISION LOSS.

Understanding Low Vision Care
Principles

1. Low Vision Care is about patients Doing.
2. Low Vision Devices are Task Specific.
3. Vision Measurement is critical.
   a. Visual Acuity
   b. Visual Field
   c. Contrast Sensitivity
Understanding Low Vision Care

- **Hand Magnifiers (ignore the X)**
  - Useful for spotting of near objects

- **Stand Magnifiers (ignore the X)**
  - Useful spotting when needing both hands
  - Useful if hands tremble

- **Electronic Magnifiers**
  - Hand Held / Table Top / Spectacle Mounted
  - Useful for higher and variable magnification
  - Useful for reading and writing
  - Useful for contrast enhancement

- **Low Vision Glasses:**
  - **Telescopes**
    - BiOptic / Full Diameter / Surgical
    - Useful for magnification at a distance

- **Low Vision Glasses:**
  - **Reverse Telescopes / Field Expanders**
    - Useful to increase field of view on tunnel vision patients

- **Low Vision Glasses:**
  - **Microscope & Prismatic Glasses**
    - Useful for reading and near tasks
LOV VISION CARE & REHABILITATION

Understanding The Possibilities

GRAND ROUNDS

Patient 1: The Severe Complainer
Patient 2: "You Can't Drive Anymore"

CLUSION OF THE CASE

LOV VISION CARE & REHABILITATION

Understanding The Possibilities

Patient 2: "Can't Drive Anymore"

Vision & Driving Philosophy
DMV Rules & Regulations in this State:
interpretations & misinterpretations
Licensure & DMV
Currently licensed
Never licensed
Now unlicensed
Basic Driving Rules

LOW VISION CARE & REHABILITATION

Understanding Low Vision Care

Referral Discussion

Google Search: Low Vision Doctor
MN State Services for the Blind
American Foundation for the Blind
American Optometric Association, Low Vision Section
American Academy of Optometry, Low Vision Section/Diplomate Program
US Department of Veterans Affairs, Visual Impairment Centers
Lighthouse/Guild for the Blind, New York
American Council of the Blind
National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
American Macular Degeneration Foundation
International Academy of Low Vision Specialists

Say to the patient:
"A LOW VISION DOCTOR MAY BE ABLE TO HELP. I SUGGEST YOU GOOGLE LOW VISION DOCTOR."
Understanding Low Vision Care

Discussion

BARRIERS TO REFERRING
• Identifying the low vision patient
• Explaining low vision care
• Losing the patient/family
• Cost of low vision care
• Other issues?

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