



Macular Degeneration: Strategies for Patient Safety While in Hospital

Macular Degeneration is a leading cause of severe vision loss and blindness in Australia. There are two main types of age related macular degeneration (AMD). These are wet (sudden vision loss) and dry (gradual loss of vision). Treatment is available for wet AMD and aimed at maintaining vision for as long as possible.

The macula is the central part of the retina and processes all visual images. It is responsible for ability to read, recognise faces, drive, and to see colours clearly. Macular Degeneration results in the loss of **CENTRAL** vision but not peripheral vision.

Symptoms, effects of vision loss and pictures showing vision with AMD are on page two

Strategies for patient safety while in hospital:

- Identify what the patient is able to see, for example, colours, distance, visual field, is one eye more affected than the other is , what assistance is required
- Document clearly for all health professionals
- A Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy review
- Walk with the patient rather than giving only verbal directions on orientation
- Check equipment and essential items including call bell are visible to the patient, ensure always returned back to same position
- Supervision with all activities of daily living
- Ensure lighting is adequate/consider obtaining extra adjustable lighting
- Display 'Vision Impaired' signs above the patient's bed
- Ensure the patient wears their glasses
- Do not move the patient's belongings unless essential



Symptoms:

- Gradual or sudden decline in the ability to see objects clearly
- Difficulty reading (that is not improved with new glasses)
- Distorted or fuzzy vision in the central field
- Difficulty seeing people's faces clearly
- Colours became dim, fade or change

Some effects of vision loss:

- Increased risk of falls
- Postural instability, balance, and mobility problems
- Slower reaction times and poor concentration
- Unable to process light properly
- Decrease in confidence and increase in fear
- Difficulty in detecting and avoiding environmental hazards and depth/ contrast perception
- Difficulty seeing their faces of their health professionals and carers
- Restricts participation in activities and functional capacity
- Reduces quality of life



An example of central vision loss with AMD.

An example of vision loss with AMD.

This has central vision colour loss and distortion



Websites for further information:

- Macular Disease Foundation Australia
- Vision Australia