

Dear colleagues,

We hope this finds you in good health and we extend our collective appreciation for the work you continue to undertake during these difficult times.

In discussion with many of our colleagues around the world, we have identified a critical gap in communication guidance for us as clinicians to proactively send to our patients.

In the current environment, patients with neovascular AMD (nAMD) and their families are concerned and anxious about attending upcoming eye clinic appointments. Patients are facing a challenging time to balance the need to attend regular appointments to maintain their vision with the anxiety of the risk of exposure.

The safety and well-being of our patients are of the utmost importance, but this should be balanced with the risk of severe vision loss by undertreating nAMD. The impact of an interruption to a recurring treatment schedule during this pandemic, the severe restrictions on clinical services, and the social distancing measures are among important aspects to be addressed.

As a first step, a clear explanation of the infection prevention protocols and safeguards of each clinic, including what to expect before, during, and after the clinic appointment, may help to alleviate these concerns.

A quick assessment of international retinal practices revealed a lack of consistent guidelines or readily available information for clinicians to communicate to their patients in the context of COVID-19.

We at the Vision Academy, with support from Bayer, have developed a **“Dear patient and family”** template letter in the context of COVID-19. This template can be adapted to your local situation and act as a proactive communication tool, to be sent via email or text posting to your patients ahead of their appointments.

You may add or delete aspects as you see appropriate, adapting to local regulations and standards, as this template aims to only provide an easy starting point to develop your own bespoke communiqué.

Please consider applying the information you feel is most suitable based on local regulations and guidelines. For patients with visual impairment, you may want to also consider increasing the font size, as appropriate.

We hope you find this template to be a useful resource and wish you all the best in these current times.

Sincerely,



Prof. Jean-François Korobelnik
Co-chair, Vision Academy Steering Committee
Chair, Real World Evidence Steering Committee



Prof. Anat Loewenstein
Co-chair, Vision Academy Steering Committee
Chair, nAMD Barometer Leadership Coalition



Guidance for patients with nAMD and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic

Contributing authors

Prof. Tariq Aslam

Consultant Ophthalmologist
Manchester Royal Eye Hospital
United Kingdom

Dr. Jane Barratt

Secretary General
International Federation on Ageing
Canada

Prof. Bora Eldem

Professor of Ophthalmology
Hacettepe University
Turkey

Prof. Robert Finger

Professor of Ophthalmic Epidemiology
and Retina Consultant
University of Bonn
Germany

Prof. Richard Gale

Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist
and Clinical Director in Ophthalmology
Honorary Visiting Professor
University of York
United Kingdom

Prof. Jean-François Korobelnik

Professor of Ophthalmology in Vitreoretinal Surgery
Head of the Ophthalmology Department University
Hospital of Bordeaux
France

Dr. Monica Lövestam-Adrian

Head of the Medical Retina Department
Lund University Hospital
Associate Professor in Ophthalmology
Lund University
Sweden

Prof. Anat Loewenstein

Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology
Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center
Full Professor of Ophthalmology
Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
Tel Aviv University
Israel

Dr. Mali Okada

Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
Australia

Mr. Nick Parker

International Agency for Prevention of Blindness
United Kingdom

Dr. Francisco Rodriguez

Scientific Director
Fundación Oftalmológica Nacional
Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology
Universidad del Rosario School of Medicine
Colombia

Ms. Michelle Sylvanowicz

Director of Global Advocacy
Bayer
Switzerland

James Talks

Consultant Ophthalmologist
Royal Victoria Infirmary
United Kingdom

Prof. Tien Yin Wong

Medical Director
Singapore National Eye Centre
Provost's Chair Professor of Ophthalmology
Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School
Chair of the Singapore Eye Research Institute
Singapore