"Seeing" in NARCOMS: a look at vision-related quality of life in the NARCOMS registry.

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Authors
Salter, AR, Tyry, T, Vollmer, T, Cutter, GR, Marrie, RAnn

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Research on vision-related quality of life (QOL) in multiple sclerosis (MS) is still limited. Tools such as the Visual Functioning Questionnaire-25 (VFQ-25) and the Vision Performance Scale (VPS) facilitate assessments of the severity of visual impairment and its impact on daily life.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this paper is to examine vision-related QOL, comorbid eye conditions, use of visual aids and utilization of eye-care providers in the North American Research Committee on Multiple Sclerosis (NARCOMS) population, and to explore these issues in those with a history of optic neuritis (ON) and diplopia.

METHODS: In 2008, NARCOMS registrants reported on their use of visual aids, the VFQ-25, VPS, history of ON, diplopia, refractive error conditions (REC) and comorbid eye diseases (CED). We conducted regression analyses and correlations between select variables.

RESULTS: The response rate for the survey was 60.4%. Of the 9107 responders, 66.7% reported visual disability measured by VPS. Of respondents, 43.1% had a history of ON and 38.6% reported prior diplopia. Frequencies of myopia (51.8%), hyperopia (26.6%), and uveitis (3.4%) exceeded those expected for the general population. Mean (SD) VFQ-25 composite score was 82.0 (14.2). A history of ON or diplopia accounted for 9.7% of the variance in the VFQ-25; 90.6% of respondents used glasses or contact lenses. Rates of utilizations of eye-care providers
were lower than expected.

**CONCLUSION:** Prior ON, diplopia, REC and CED adversely impact vision-related QOL in MS. Increased utilization of eye-care providers and use of visual aids could improve vision-related QOL in people with MS.

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