

## Editorial

# Effective glaucoma patient care: Unlocking success through communication

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Glaucoma, a chronic and progressive optic neuropathy, often remains asymptomatic in its early stages. Detecting damage within the visual system becomes challenging until the disease reaches an advanced stage, and unfortunately, the repercussions are irreversible. Despite this grim reality, there is hope for effective management and preservation of remaining vision throughout a patient's lifetime through appropriate treatment.

Treatment options such as medical intervention, laser therapy, and surgeries are at the discretion of the treating ophthalmologist. However, the success of these treatments relies heavily on patient compliance. Understanding the interplay of three critical factors is paramount for long-term adherence: An awareness of the risks posed by untreated glaucoma, faith in the treatment's ability to prevent future damage, and the tangible burdens associated with treatment, including complex regimens, costs, side effects and alterations to quality of life.

The discussion reveals a significant hurdle: The lack of motivation for sustained treatment due to difficulties in grasping the treatment benefits. Thus, patient education emerges as a key element in successful glaucoma management. While information from friends, relatives, and the internet may lack organisation and focus, the treating doctor stands as the most reliable source. Effective communication should extend beyond the initial visit, becoming a cornerstone of every follow-up appointment.

A seminal study on the patient's perspective in glaucoma care identified five crucial questions that patients expect their doctors to address:<sup>[1]</sup>

1. The impact of glaucoma on the patient's ability to work (quality of Life)

2. Understanding the disease
3. Side effects of treatment and strategies to manage them
4. Long-term use of medication (compliance, adherence, and persistence)
5. The cost of treatment.

Non-compliance with treatment is a global concern for chronic diseases, and glaucoma is no exception. A review article on adherence to glaucoma medication in this issue of the Global Journal of Cataract Surgery and Research in Ophthalmology underscores this problem.<sup>[2]</sup> Effectively addressing this challenge requires patients to comprehend the disease and actively participate in its management. The treating ophthalmologist plays a pivotal role in achieving this breakthrough, emphasising the importance of education for both patients and their caregivers. The only viable solution is for doctors to dedicate ample time to communicate with patients during each visit, adhering to the mantra of 'COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE AND COMMUNICATE' for effective glaucoma care.

## REFERENCES

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**How to cite this article:** Nayak BK. Effective glaucoma patient care: Unlocking success through communication. *Glob J Cataract Surg Res Ophthalmol.* 2023;2:51. doi: 10.25259/GJCSRO\_33\_2023

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Received: 23 December 2023 Accepted: 23 December 2023 Published: 30 December 2023 DOI: 10.25259/GJCSRO\_33\_2023

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