



wgXnKoBL

# Impact of COVID-19 upon a Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration referral refinement service in Wales

---

## Entry details

Main Contact Author Full Name including title (Prof, Dr, Ms etc)

| Miss Bethan Pugh

Main Contact Email

| bethan.pugh@hotmail.co.uk

Main Contact Job Title

| Optometrist

Main contact place of work /department and university

| School of Optometry & Vision Sciences, Cardiff University

Main contact short bio

| Bethan Pugh is an optometrist who works in a community optometric practice. She previously worked in a practice that provides a referral refinement service and she undertook the study as part for her Masters in Clinical Optometry at Cardiff University.

Area (Health Board or CCG areas and country in which this research was conducted)

| Aneurin Bevan Health Board

Key words:

| Maculopathy, referral-refinement, eyecare, quantitative, qualitative

Funding & commercial relationships

| N/a

I am happy for our presentation at the symposium to be recorded and made available for attendees and others to view

| ✓

I am happy for this abstract to be published



---

## Submission questions

Title of presentation

Impact of COVID-19 upon a Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration referral refinement service in Wales

Abstract, must include the following four headings: Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusions

**Purpose:** To evaluate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic upon the Macular Degeneration Referral Refinement service (MDRRS) provided in an optometric practice in the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

**Method:** All patients who attended the MDRRS from 1st Jan 2020 for 25 weeks were included. Clinical data were collected from the original referrals to the optometric practice, the optometric MDRRS referrals to the hospital eye services (HES) (including visual acuity and OCT scans for triage using a virtual clinic) and the patient's hospital record. Patients were also given a survey to provide feedback about the optometric MDRRS.

**Results:** During the Covid-19 lockdown period (weeks 12-25) there was a 60% reduction in referrals to MDRRS compared to pre-Covid (weeks 1-11). The patients were younger and had a worse VA in the affected eye. The referral to treatment time for patients with wet AMD was markedly reduced (8.5 vs 27 days). 90% of patients indicated that optometric MDRRS was very good or good.

**Conclusions:** The significant reduction of patients attending the MDRRS during Covid-19 lockdown coincided with the suspension of routine sight tests. This suggests that they may play an important part in the detection of wet AMD. Patient feedback was positive regarding the optometric MDRRS and recommendations include improving patient awareness of the need for eye tests, increasing the number of practices providing the service, provision of an information leaflet about MDRRS and the role optometrists could play in reducing the workload of the HES if trained appropriately to triage the patients.

## Authors & affiliations

**Prof, Barbara, Ryan**, Professor of Optometry, School of Optometry & Vision Sciences, Cardiff University, Studied Optometry at City University and did a PhD at Cardiff University. Having worked in hospital optometry, the voluntary sector, the LVSW and Welsh Government, Barbara now works part-time in primary care optometry and is a Professor of Optometry at Cardiff University. Chairs the WOC., ryanb@cardiff.ac.uk

**Prof, Rachel, North**, Professor of Optometry, School of Optometry & Vision Sciences, Cardiff University, Rachel is an optometrist at Cardiff University. Her research interests include the early detection and management of glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy and the evaluation of pathfinder eyecare services in community optometry in Wales., north@cardiff.ac.uk

---

Log in to [chamberdunn.awardsplatform.com](https://chamberdunn.awardsplatform.com) to see complete entry attachments.