

# Identifying and Managing Visual Impairment in Older Patients with Falls on a Care of the Elderly (COTE) ward

**R N I B**

See differently

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## Background and aims

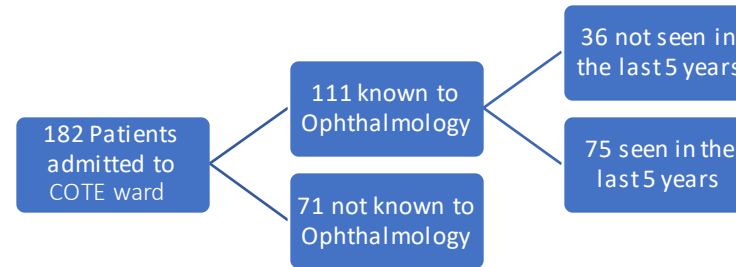
In 2019, the Royal College of Physicians advised that all patients should have their vision screened if identified as a falls risk and produced the Look out! Bedside screening tool to increase inpatient screening (1). With normal ageing, visual impairment increases having an impact on independent living, social isolation, mood as well as falls (2,3). Patients with reduced vision are twice as likely to fall as those without impairment (4).

Our primary aim: to implement a bedside visual screening test and establish an onward inpatient referral to Hospital Eye Services

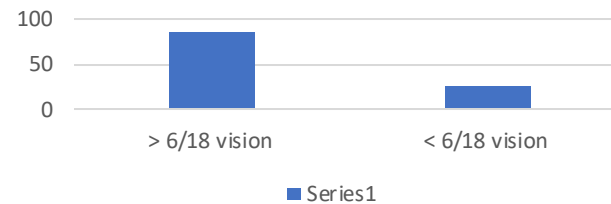
Secondary aim: to improve patient experience on the ward with support from Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) and visual aids.

## Method

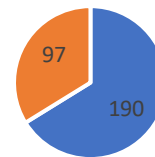
A pilot study cross referenced falls admissions with previous known ophthalmic data to estimate the proportion of known vision loss in this group. In the second phase of the project, a bedside visual screening test has been introduced for all patients admitted to COTE with a fall. Patients failing the screening are reviewed by an RNIB ECLO and if necessary, a prompt inpatient hospital eye service review is arranged.



Patients known to ophthalmology



Post bedside screening implementation



- No onward referral needed
- Referred to hospital eye services

## Results summary

Of 182 patients admitted following a fall, in the pilot study, 112 (61%) were known to ophthalmology previously. Of patients known to ophthalmology, 28 (25%) had vision of 6/18 or worse and would be considered to struggle with daily living tasks.

One year following implementation of bedside vision testing, 287 patients had been reviewed after failing bedside screening. 97 of these had an onward referral sent or an intervention performed.

## Conclusions and future direction

The first ECLO post was funded by work in this project and a successful pathway has been developed to address visual impairment in this vulnerable group of patients. The short term aim is to expand to other wards including patients with hip fractures. The longer term aim is to see whether these measures to improve visual impairment leads to a reduction in falls.

References

- [1. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg161/chapter/1-Recommendations](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg161/chapter/1-Recommendations)
- [2. https://www.college-optometrists.org/uploads/assets/67bd9819-03ae-44a0-adc725f0685c042e/3022ecc7-90b8-4bab-b9ac8d18ae4cc569/The-Importance-of-Vision-in-Preventing-Falls.pdf](https://www.college-optometrists.org/uploads/assets/67bd9819-03ae-44a0-adc725f0685c042e/3022ecc7-90b8-4bab-b9ac8d18ae4cc569/The-Importance-of-Vision-in-Preventing-Falls.pdf)
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- Cumming RG, Ivers R, Clemson L, Cullen J, Hayes MF, Tanzer M, et al. Improving vision to prevent falls in frail older people: a randomized trial. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2007;55(2):175-81.