

## Does screening improve the results of treatment for diabetic retinopathy?

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### **Abstract Aims:**

To assess whether screening affects the visual outcome of patients treated for diabetic maculopathy with argon laser photocoagulation.

### **Audit Standards:**

Visual outcomes as defined by the Early Treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy Study (ETDRS).

### **Methods:**

The clinical notes of patients with clinically significant macular edema (CSME) treated at the Southampton eye unit 1998 were reviewed retrospectively. Visual acuity and the number of laser treatments were recorded over a period of 3 years following treatment. The number of patients with doubling of the visual angle was calculated at 12, 24, and 36 months following treatment and compared against the results of the immediate treatment arm of the ETDRS.

### **Results:**

106 patients underwent macular argon laser treatment for CSME during 1998. The number of eyes with moderate visual loss at 12, 24 and 36 months was equivalent to that seen in the immediate treatment arm of the ETDRS and significantly better than the level of moderate visual loss seen in the deferred group ( $p \leq 0.04$ ). None of the 106 patients undergoing treatment required a fluorescein angiogram.

### **Conclusion:**

Screening reduces the visual loss due to diabetic maculopathy equivalent to visual loss in the treatment arm of the ETDRS.

