

## Eye health management

### Macular Society funded project

# Increase in patient satisfaction within diagnostic consultations: the Macular Society survey 2013

---

**Emily Boxell**, PhD student and **Clare Bradley**, Professor of Health Psychology, Royal Holloway University of London

---

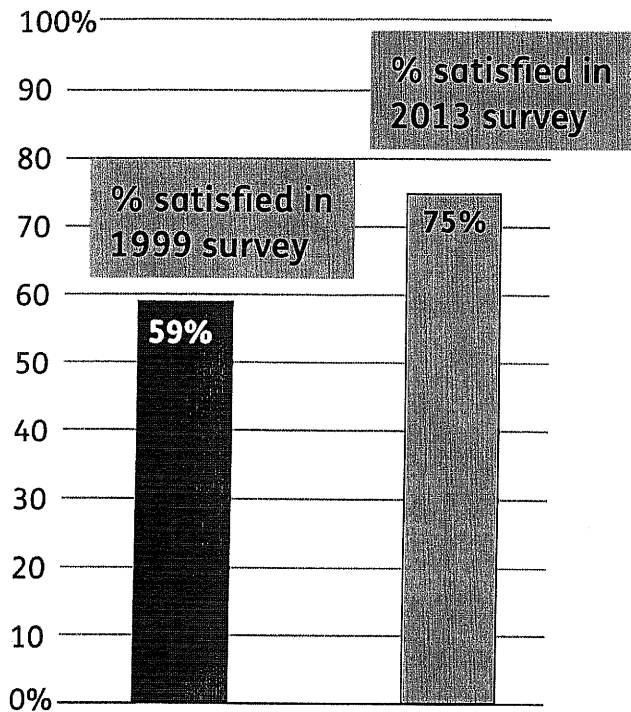
In November 2013, 4,000 members of the Macular Society took part in a survey on patient satisfaction. Completed copies of 1,545 surveys were returned and, in addition, 26 were completed over the phone. This survey was an updated version of one sent to members in 1999 which revealed many negative experiences at diagnostic consultations. The results, published in 2002, influenced guidelines published by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) in 2009 for improving patients' experiences.

Initial results of the 2013 survey were presented at the Macular Society conference in September 2014. Subsequent analysis was completed, controlled for

members' age, gender and NHS/private healthcare.

The results revealed the following:

- Overall satisfaction with diagnostic consultations has improved significantly, both from the time of the 1999 survey, and since publication of the RCOphth guidelines.
- Members diagnosed after the 1999 survey more often reported that the healthcare professional who diagnosed their macular condition seemed interested in them as a person. This had improved significantly after the 2009 RCOphth guidelines.



Patient satisfaction with their first consultation when macular condition was diagnosed.

Several questions in the 2013 survey investigated whether recommendations from the RCOphth guidelines had been acted upon.

- Significant improvements have been made in areas of information and support provision, including providing written information, delivering “appropriate help, support and advice” at diagnosis, and informing patients about the Macular Society. However these are still far from optimal. Before the 2009 guidelines

22% of respondents reported being told about the Macular Society. This had risen to only 30% in 2013.

- Encouragingly, most patients are now being told the name of their condition at the time of diagnosis. The figure went up from 77% in 1999 to 90% in 2013.
- However, no significant improvements were made in giving further contacts for help and support, and providing information on hallucinations: both were reported by fewer than 20% before and after the guidelines in 2009. Provision of information about what to do if a sudden deterioration in vision is noticed also remained far from ideal: 49% before the guidelines versus 56% after their publication.

There are some key areas where further improvements are needed. The work of the Macular Society and the RCOphth is not done yet.

**Reference:**

Mitchell et al (2002) Br J Ophthalmol, 86, 777-781.