Macular oedema

Macular oedema is the accumulation of fluid in the macula. The macula is a small part of the retina, about the size of a grain of rice, at the back of the eye that gives us our clear central vision: the vision needed for reading, recognising faces or watching TV. Macular oedema leads to this central vision becoming distorted.

Macular oedema can occur for many different reasons including: following eye surgery, central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) and occasionally branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO) in the retina. Also, some inflammatory diseases and types of retinal vascular disease, retinal dystrophies, diabetic retinopathy, wet macular degeneration or following an injury to the eye can lead to the condition.

Treatment
There are several treatments available for macular oedema and the ophthalmologist will decide which treatment option is best for a particular patient/condition. All the drugs currently used have to be injected into the eye.

Lucentis® (medical name ranibizumab) has been approved for diabetic macular oedema (DMO) as a treatment option if the eye has a central retinal thickness of 400 micrometres or more at the start of treatment. Lucentis® has also been approved for macular oedema caused by CRVO and BRVO where there is a
blockage in a vein of the retina and is thought to be suitable for a particular patient.

Eylea® (medical name aflibercept) has been approved for the treatment of macular oedema caused by diabetes (DMO) and visual impairment due to macular oedema secondary to branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO).

Ozurdex® has been approved for macular oedema (CRVO and BRVO). It is also approved as a treatment for DMO in people who have undergone cataract surgery and do not respond or are unsuitable for anti-VEGF drugs. Ozurdex is a biodegradable intravitreal implant: released slowly it acts locally to reduce inflammation around the oedema and to improve vision. An implant can last for up to six months.

Iluvien®, is another steroid implant that is approved for patients with chronic DMO and is generally available for patients who have not benefited from other treatments.

Macular oedema associated with inherited retinal diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa or retinoschisis can be treated with eye drops such as Dorzolamide or tablets of Acetazolamide.

If would like further information about injection treatment for the eye please ask for our booklet Treatment for macular conditions MS027.