

Diabetes macular edema, a underestimated visual problem

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In Mexico, at least 14 million people have developed macular edema due to diabetes (DME), which like retinopathy affects central vision and can lead to blindness if not treated early .

"There are no exact figures for the annual prevalence of people with macular degeneration related to [diabetes](#) in the country, but throughout

the world eight thousand new cases of DME and related health problems are diagnosed each year," said Rafael Bueno, chief of Retina Service at the General Hospital of the Ministry of Health in Mexico City.

A very sensitive area of the [retina](#) is called the macula, which contains a liquid that is vital to the efficient functioning of the eyeball; when this fluid tends to come out is called [macular edema](#) and can cause blindness in the patient. A reason, perhaps the main one, for the fluid in the macula to leak is the high level of glucose in blood.

It is not uncommon for diabetic macular edema to present after the onset of [diabetic retinopathy](#), a complex process of deterioration of the retina that produces the obstruction of blood vessels and the occurrence of bleeding, because of high levels of blood glucose. In an estimated of 70 percent of patients with diabetic retinopathy, macular edema will eventually develop.

Blurred vision is the symptom to consider as a possible appearance of [diabetic macular edema](#) and perception of floating particles, shadows or spots, along with a difficulty of seeing at night .

The ophthalmologist at General Hospital stressed the importance for patients to consult a retina specialist at the time they are diagnosed with diabetes and subsequently have an annual review of their vision, through examinations measuring eye pressure and visual acuity."



Furthermore, he stressed, the importance to follow a metabolic control to maintain normal glucose as well as cholesterol, triglycerides and [blood pressure levels](#).

A conventional therapy for treating macular edema is the application of laser, which allows to regulate the progression of the problem, but in some cases can be aggressive, since it causes burns to the retina that can cause the tissue to deteriorate to the point of destruction.

Nowadays the antiangiogenic therapy is feasible for the treatment of macular edema, which is based on drugs that are applied by an intraocular injection and slow the progression of the problem producing stabilization and improvement of lost lines of vision.

Dr. Rafael Bueno explained that many patients with macular [edema](#) are the children of patients who have had macular degeneration and to prevent it is important to visit the eye doctor starting at the age of 45, at least once a year, to value the risk of having DME.

"I wish we could prevent diabetes. Yet in Mexico we have a heavy genetic load and thus a child of a family with diabetes should be alert because surely at some point it will develop," said Rafael Bueno.

He recommends a balanced diet rich in green foods with vitamin A and eating foods rich in Omega 3 to combat the onset of [macular degeneration](#) related to age.

"We're seeing people developing diabetes at younger ages, it being a more aggressive and difficult to control disease; these patients, if they do not have adequate control of glucose levels, over time will develop vision problems," the expert added.

Provided by Investigación y Desarrollo

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