

New app demystifies glaucoma

September 25 2015, by George Wigmore

Researchers from City University London have developed a highly engaging new app, supported by Allergan Pharmaceuticals, to educate people who have been newly diagnosed with glaucoma about the condition.

What makes this [app](#) different is that this is [glaucoma](#) education in a simple, visual, jargon-free, easy to use format, which makes it more engaging and helps people better understand the potential impact of the condition. The app, designed for use on tablet devices covers topics such as why eye pressure is important as well as the correct use of eyedrops.

This app is one part of the 'Glaucoma in Perspective' programme, which comprises two apps – the second app being for health care professionals, which aims to facilitate and engage discussion and education of patients with the condition

With an estimated half a million people in the UK living with the condition undiagnosed – and affecting around 65 million people worldwide - glaucoma describes a group of eye conditions that result in progressive damage to the optic nerve which connects the retina to the brain, causing people to gradually lose vision.

What makes glaucoma dangerous, however, is that this early vision loss can go undetected and as glaucoma worsens, these compensatory perceptive mechanisms unravel leading to noticeable sight loss, visual impairment and in some cases blindness. The condition is irreversible.

One of the main features of the app is a series of interactive demonstrations that highlight the subtle sight loss that can occur with glaucoma, especially in the early stages of the disease. The app technology allows the user to experience the impact of glaucoma on everyday situations such as driving, cooking, walking down the stairs or shopping. Users are also provided with up-to-date information about their condition and the treatments available via a series of novel animations.

The development team, led by Professor David Crabb along with Dr Nicholas Smith, based the interactive app on findings from their research into patients' perception of [sight loss](#) with glaucoma.

Commenting on the project David Crabb, Professor of Statistics and Vision Research at City University London, said: "If you have glaucoma, or someone you know has glaucoma, this app has been developed for you. By working in partnership with Allergan we hope we can help raise awareness of glaucoma and explain why people invariably have no symptoms in the early stages of the disease. We have deliberately kept the app simple to use and easy to understand. We also hope the app will help clinicians better explain the benefits of adhering to treatment."

"It's been enlightening to work with Professor Crabb and his team and be part of producing something that should really make a positive difference for patients and the ophthalmology community", concluded Miriam Kenrick, Glaucoma International Strategic Marketing Director for Allergan.

Provided by City University London

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