

Prescription of Low Vision Devices

Low vision devices (LVD) help low vision patients to maximise their remaining vision and live independently. Types of LVDs are described in more detail in the article 'Low Vision Devices and Training' on pages 6, 7 of this issue. Basically, LVDs are either optical or non-optical. Optical devices have one or more lenses to modify or enlarge an image and they need to be prescribed by an eye care worker (ophthalmologist, optometrist or refractionist). Non-optical devices do not have a lens system but can make it easier to see objects. They can be prescribed as part of a low vision assessment but are often recommended by educators or rehabilitation workers.

LVDs should be considered for all ages from young children to the oldest adults. LVDs are not just for reading but are designed to observe the world around us – children can inspect toys and look for animals. Use of magnifiers is preferred

instead of preparing material in large print.

To prescribe LVDs the following should be taken into account:

- Types of tasks at home, work or school (Near, intermediate or distance)
- Outcome, e.g. N8 print size (newsprint) or 6/12 distance acuity
- Hands free or hand needed to hold/guide LVD
- Non-optical devices used in combination, such as lighting, bold pens for writing.

The power of the magnifier is calculated from the LogMAR visual acuity. For example, if the best corrected acuity is 6/75 (20/250) or 0.08 and the desired outcome from magnification is 6/12 (20/40) or 0.5, a 6x magnifier should be tried. This is obtained by dividing the denominators (75 by 12) or from the decimal equivalents $0.08/0.5 = 6.25$. The magnifier should be tried with the material or objects needed by the patient. Magnification prescribed should be

as low a power as possible to give a wider field of view.

Most LVDs are difficult to use because of the limited field of view through the lens. Training is necessary for both children and adults. It is important that they understand how to use the device/s prescribed and the limitations.

Referral

After the low vision clinic assessment and prescription of LVDs, the need for training or other services should be discussed with the patient and family. Low vision clinic staff need to be aware of the range of specialist and community-based services that could be needed by people with low vision.

Reference

- 1 Bailey IL, Lovie JE. New design principles for visual acuity letter charts. *Am J Optom Physiol Opt* 1976; 53:740-745.



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EXAMINATIONS CALENDAR 2004 (UK and OVERSEAS)

UK Examination Dates

Examination	Applications and Fees Due	Essay and/or MCQ Papers	Clinicals/Orals/OSES ⁺ /OSCES ⁺
Part 1 MRCOphth	31 August 2004	11–12 October 2004	None
	29 November 2004	24–25 January 2005	None
Part 2 MRCOphth	4 May 2004	14 June 2004	14–18 June 2004
	20 September 2004	1 November 2004	1–5 November 2004
	February 2005 (additional centre- TBC)	February 2005 (additional centre- TBC)	February 2005
Part 3 MRCOphth*	19 January 2004	1 March 2004	1–5 March 2004
	2 August 2004	13 September 2004	13–17 September 2004
	10 January 2005	7 March 2005	7–11 March 2005

This examination has changed since September 2003: please contact the Examinations Department for further details

Diploma in Ophthalmology (DRCOphth) – 2004	17 May 2004	28 June 2004	28–30 June 2004
	4 October 2004	15 November 2004	15–17 November 2004

From November 2001, there has been no practical refraction section in the Diploma Examination

India Examination Dates: Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, South India

Provided a minimum of six candidates are booked to sit, the Parts 1, 2 and 3 Membership Examinations are scheduled to be held on the following dates

Part 1 MRCOphth	31 August 2004	11–12 October 2004	None
Part 1 MRCOphth	28 February 2005	25–26 April 2005	None
Part 2 MRCOphth	31 August 2004	13 October 2004	13–14 October 2004
Part 3 MRCOphth	31 August 2004	14 October 2004	14–15 October 2004

* Any changes in any of the above dates will be posted on the website and within application packs
+ Objective Structured Examination and Objective Structured Clinical Examination

Applications packs can be obtained from: Examinations Department at the above address

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