

Clinical Approach for Low Vision: Rehabilitation Strategies for the Main Eye Diseases

Abordagem Clínica da Baixa Visão: Estratégias de Reabilitação nas Principais Afecções Oculares

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Low vision and blindness remain among the greatest contemporary challenges in ophthalmology. Despite significant advances in diagnostic methods, clinical and surgical treatments, and technological development, a significant number of patients still progress to permanent visual impairment, profoundly compromising their autonomy, functionality, and social participation. In this context, visual rehabilitation strategies play a central role; they are not an alternative but rather an essential component of comprehensive eye care.

This special edition of the eOftalmo Journal, dedicated to **Clinical Approach for Low Vision: Rehabilitation Strategies for the Main Eye Diseases**, was prepared with the aim of broadening the knowledge of ophthalmologists and other health professionals regarding the wide range of rehabilitative interventions currently available. Rather than discussing diseases in isolation, we seek to highlight specific approaches for restoring functionality, promoting independence, and fostering the social inclusion of individuals with visual impairment.

Highly prevalent conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and advanced glaucoma remain among the leading causes of irreversible visual loss worldwide. Hereditary retinal diseases, high ametropia, neuro-ophthalmological disorders, and keratoconus may be added to those conditions. They all share the potential to severely impact quality of life when not accompanied by adequate rehabilitation strategies.

Even today, many patients with low vision are not referred in a timely manner to specialized rehabilitation services, either owing to a lack of unawareness of available options or the mistaken perception that "nothing more can be done." This gap reinforces the importance of disseminating knowledge about visual rehabilitation as early as the medical training stage, reinforcing the understanding that treatment extends beyond preserving visual acuity for maximizing functional visual performance.

Low vision rehabilitation is inherently interdisciplinary. It involves ophthalmologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, pedagogues, and social workers all working in an integrated, patient-centered way. By recognizing and valuing this approach, ophthalmology expands its

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scope beyond the doctor's office, directly influencing daily activities, education, employability, and social participation for individuals with visual impairment.

Paradoxically, visual rehabilitation remains an underexplored professional field, despite its growing demand. Population aging, increased survival of patients with chronic diseases, and heightened awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities all point to a scenario of sustained expansion in this area. Investing in visual rehabilitation therefore represents not only a response to a pressing social need but also an opportunity for professional growth among qualified healthcare providers.

This special edition aims to fulfill a dual purpose: to simultaneously serve as a technical and scientific resource for professional development and as an invitation to reflect on the social responsibility of ophthalmology. The contents presented herein are

intended to encourage early referral, networking, and the dissemination of information on rehabilitation strategies to ophthalmologists, other health professionals, and the general population.

Promoting vision also means promoting dignity, autonomy, and inclusion. We intend for this issue to help strengthen that commitment.

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