

Position Statement of EyeHealth Scotland Regarding Royal College of Ophthalmologists Hydroxychloroquine Recommendations

BACKGROUND

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists recommended screening for Hydroxychloroquine and Chloroquine Retinopathy in February 2018.

Due to the different funding mechanisms in Scotland, the additional Ophthalmology capacity required to allow implementation can only be achieved to the detriment of the existing care of people with active sight-threatening conditions, who may permanently lose sight without timely intervention.

Eyehealth Scotland (A Scottish Government recognised group comprising all Clinical Ophthalmology Leads in Scotland, with representation from Optometry Scotland, Hospital Optometry, Orthoptists, Ophthalmic Nursing, and the Royal National Institute for Blind People) sought the advice of the United Kingdom National Screening Committee:

In June 2019 the UK National Screening Committee advised that these recommendations do not constitute screening.

EYEHEALTH POSITION

After discussion with all EyeHealth members, there was unanimous agreement on the following:

- 1) The Royal College of Ophthalmologists recommendations should not be adopted in Scotland.
- 2) People who take Hydroxychloroquine should continue to attend their local Optometrist for routine eye examinations, which are free in Scotland.
- 3) People taking Hydroxychloroquine should be informed to attend their local Optometrist acutely if any visual symptoms develop, as they would for any other visual symptom.
- 4) If there is suspicion of Hydroxychloroquine retinopathy, Community Optometry should refer to Ophthalmology.
- 5) If, despite all the evidence to the contrary, the Scottish Government Health Department do recommend Ophthalmology monitoring of asymptomatic people taking Hydroxychloroquine, then additional funding is required, in addition to the existing funding arrangements.

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