

## The Low Vision patient: Making a friend”

Joe Fontenot MD,  
CLVT

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## Disclosure

Dr. Fontenot has nothing financial to disclose

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## Experience

- Cardiologist, 1972-2002
- Macular degeneration, 988
- Certified Low Vision Therapist, 2003
- Associate Member AAO 2003
- Chair, AAAO Vision Rehabilitation Committee 2012-17
- Medical Director, Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation, 2005-present

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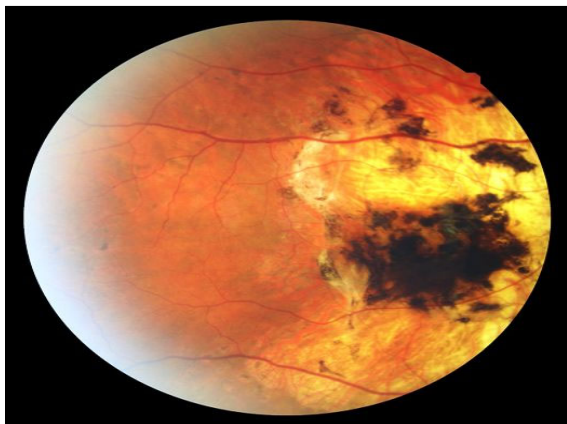
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**Low Vision**  
VA < 20/50  
field < 20 degrees  
contrast loss

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**How Many of your patients have LV ?**

- Type of practice (as, retina, glaucoma) and age of patients

? 5% to 15%

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## How many receive low vision care ?

- Baltimore 2020 20%
- Alabama 2018 11.4%<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

\*Goldstein et al. Low vision care-Out of sight. Out of mind. Ophthalmic Epidemiol.2020 Aug; 27(4):252-258. doi: 10.1080/09286586.2020.1717546. Epub 2020 Jan 27.

\*\*Capri J;136(4)aker et al. Rehabilitation referral for patients with irreversible vision impairment seen in a public safety-net eye clinic. JAMA Ophthalmol. 2018;400-408. doi:10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2018.0241.

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## Does LVR help?

- Stelmack, J. A., Rinne, S., Mancil, R. M., Dean, D., Moran, D. A., Tang, X. C., et al. (October, 2008). Successful outcomes from a structured curriculum used in the veterans affairs low vision intervention trial JVI/B. *102*(10).
- Stelmack, J. A., Tang, X. C., Reda, D. J., Rinne, S., Mancil, R. M., Massof, R. et al.(2008). Outcomes of the Veterans Affairs low vision intervention trial (LOVIT). *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 126(5), 608-617.
- Scott, I. U., Smiddy, W. E., Schiffman, J., Feuer W. J., & Pappas, C. J. (1999). Quality of life of low-vision patients and the impact of low-vision services. *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, 128(1), 54-62.
- Many non-randomized trials
- Subjective surveys (19/20 in CSVr 2007 survey)
- Rovner, B.W. et al. (2014). Low vision depression prevention trial in age-related Macular Degeneration. *Ophthalmology*. July 2014.

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**What to do with the low vision patient?**

- ? Ignore vision loss
- Provide LVR yourself
- Let Techs/EMR do it

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# EHR

- Let EMR flag if:
- VA < 20/40, scotoma, field defect contrast loss

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# Why educate/refer?

Because of the impact of even moderate vision loss on life

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# IMPACT

## CANNOT:

- DRIVE, READ, use Computer NORMALLY
- WORK, DO HOBBIES
- WRITE, SIGN NAME
- RECOGNIZE FACES
- PERFORM MANY ROUTINE and DEAIRED ACTIVITIES

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## Causing

- DEPRESSION, ISOLATION
- LOSS of INDEPENDENCE
- FALLS, ACCIDENTS
- MEDICATION ERRORS
- CHARLES BONNET SYNDROME
- HALLUCINATIONS, PANIC
- INCREASED MORTALITY

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## Briefly discuss

- If total blindness unlikely- as, ARMD- tell patient
- Ask re Ch. Bonnet syndrome
- Don't abandon- reschedule
- Provide hope

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## Refer Early

- Do not wait until patient legally blind, depressed, lacking resources.
- Easier for patient to adapt/learn early

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# 1<sup>st</sup> patient

73 yr. M, veteran, retired postmaster  
AMD, glaucoma, complications  
following cataract removal  
Legally blind 3 yrs., not driving or  
reading  
Suicidal ideation noted by cardiologist

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## If you had low vision, would you want to be able to:

- Read
- Write, sign your name
- Recognize family, friends
- Use a computer normally
- Etc.

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## Difference in Perception

“Differences between ophthalmologist’s  
and patient’s perspective of quality of  
life with ARMD”

Conclusion: “ visual loss secondary to  
ARMD, ophthal. underestimated its  
effect on patient’s quality of life.”

Brown ,G.C. (2000). *Canad J Ophthal* 2000 Apr;35(3):127-33

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## Why do patients not get LVR?

- Patient refuses
- VR not available
- Dr. does not refer

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## VISION REHAB SERVICES

- LOW VISION CLINICS
- S STATE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB
- GO TO [AAO.OR.ORG](http://AAO.OR.ORG), ENTER "SMART SIGHT PATIENT HANDOUT
- Opth. and Opt. Training programs
- [WWW.CSVRLOWVISION.ORG](http://WWW.CSVRLOWVISION.ORG) "Resources" list
- "SIGHT SAVERS AMERICA" AT THE MEETING
- GOOGLE

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**Easiest**  
Let computer  
and Tech do it  
**Please !**

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# Thank You

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# QUESTIONS + Suggestions

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## An Early Case of Non-referral

Gloucester has his eyes plucked out by the evil daughter Regan. One person asks, "How will he find his way?"

*Regan commands: "Go thrust him out at the gates and let him smell his way to Dover"*

King Lear, Shakespeare W 1607 (III.vii.93-94).

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