

Care Pathway Analysis of Cataracts

Case Study



A medical device company developed a novel, non-surgical treatment for cataracts and commissioned York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC) to undertake a care pathway analysis (CPA) of this new treatment compared with cataract surgery. The objectives were to identify the care pathway for adults with cataracts in the UK as well as the potential uses, value propositions and barriers to adoption of the new technology.

The CPA involved a pragmatic, targeted search to identify relevant guidelines in cataracts and a qualitative evaluation using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Ten guidelines were included in the review and informed the development of a care pathway which was validated during interviews with clinicians and budget holders.

We found that clinical practice varies by Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and country at multiple stages in the pathway (Figure 1), especially around: the involvement of the GP, the criteria used to determine whether a patient is referred into secondary care, and the professional who delivers the pre- and post-operative assessments.

Our work identified that the new technology could be introduced as a treatment option to improve or stabilise vision and slow disease progression in several populations. Treatment could be delivered in primary care optometry by optometrists or clinical technicians. The technology may also yield value as a diagnostic and screening tool, which could improve standardisation between clinicians and reduce inaccurate referrals.

Visual acuity, patient satisfaction, quality of life, tear break-up time, and endothelial count were identified as key outcomes, alongside long-term efficacy and safety. Payment for services using the technology and the cost of the device were suggested as potential barriers to adoption. This information provided useful to the company and was used to inform the marketing strategy as well as clinical and economic evaluations.



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Figure 1. UK care pathway for adults with cataracts

