

Choroidal Naevus Patient Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to give you general information about your condition. Most of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and the healthcare team, but may act as a starting point for discussion. If after reading it you have any concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team.

What is a choroidal naevus?

They are pigmented (darkly coloured) patches seen in the retina at the back of the eye. They are similar to skin naevi (moles) that are present in other parts of the body and are probably present at birth, growing mainly in childhood and rarely beyond puberty. Just like in the skin, the eyes contain cells which produce pigment and these cells can cause these “moles” to develop inside the eye and are present in about 5 in 100 of the general population, most commonly in people with dark features. Naevi tend to be incidental findings when you have an eye examination at the opticians or ophthalmic Department for other eye problems.

Do I need treatment?

Generally, typical naevi are left well alone, but suspicious lesions are monitored as a very small percentage of naevi can develop into a malignant (cancerous) lesion known as Choroidal Malignant Melanoma (CMM). There are specific rare features of naevi which can be a warning sign of the possible development of early Choroidal Malignant Melanoma. The presence of these specific features would require a further referral to a regional centre (Sheffield) for further assessment. This is a rare event. Fundus photographs (photographs of the retina) are helpful in monitoring changes, although not all naevi require regular eye clinic monitoring. A very small number of naevi that show growth or other suspicious features would need treatment. Naevi are mostly harmless although certain types (which comprise only a small proportion of naevi) whilst not cancerous, may be associated with a mild visual loss over many years.

What happens afterwards?

You will have a photograph taken so we can keep a record of its size and location. We may need to make some measurements of the naevus using an ultrasound scan machine. It is helpful for future reference (if you move house/ change opticians) if you have a photograph of your naevus. Your optician should be able to provide you with a copy, could email a digital copy. If you need a copy of the photo from us please tell the Clinician who sees you in the Eye Clinic your/your Opticians contact details for this purpose. We advise that you visit an optician on a yearly basis; the optician will be able to monitor your eye for changes. You do not need to be followed up in the Eye Clinic unless you have another eye problem.