

Understanding Dry Eye Disease: A Managed Care Perspective

Dry eye disease (DED) is a multifactorial disorder that results in eye discomfort, visual disturbance, and often ocular surface damage. This supplement to *The American Journal of Managed Care* discusses the prevalence of DED and the economic burden associated with DED. The etiology and pathophysiology of DED will also be discussed, including disease progression and impact on the patient's quality of life. With greater understanding of the pathophysiology of DED, there are numerous available therapies/strategies for the management of the disorder, ranging from artificial tear substitutes, anti-inflammatory agents, secretagogues, punctal plugs, and systemic immunosuppressives, to surgery. This activity will aim to provide managed healthcare professionals with an understanding of when and how to use these different strategies to reduce morbidity and prevent complications.

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■ Disclosures

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Estimated time to complete activity: 1.0 hour

Type of activity: Knowledge

This activity is supported by an educational grant from Allergan, Inc.

Intended Audience

The audience for this supplement consists of medical directors, pharmacy directors, and other managed care professionals who oversee the care of patients with dry eye disease.

Statement of Educational Need

Dry eye disease (DED), also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca or dysfunctional tear syndrome, is a multifactorial disorder that results in eye discomfort, visual disturbance, and often ocular surface damage. The reported prevalence of DED ranges from less than 0.1% to as high as 33%, depending on the different definitions that have been used in various publications. This has been verified by large cross-sectional survey studies, such as the Women's Health Study (WHS) and the Physicians' Health Study (PHS), which have shown that among adults older than 50 years, DED is seen in 7.8% of women and 4.34% of men, which translates to approximately 4.9 million Americans older than 50 being affected by DED.

Considering the population groups affected by DED, it is important to understand the impact of this disease. Studies have shown that DED can affect visual function, workplace productivity, and quality of life (QoL). In addition, DED has been shown to increase costs, especially costs due to increased physician office visits. This happens because treatment of DED is inadequate and patients do not receive adequate symptom relief, or face disease progression. Thus, considering the prevalence of DED, the associated burden (direct and indirect costs), and impact on patient QoL, there is a need for improved care of patients who suffer from DED to help alleviate these issues.

With greater understanding of the pathophysiology of DED, there are numerous available therapies/strategies for the management of the disorder, ranging from artificial tear substitutes, anti-inflammatory agents, secretagogues, punctal plugs, and systemic immunosuppressives, to surgery. Understanding when and how to use these different strategies can help to reduce morbidity and prevent complications. The issue that arises with these therapies is that although they have been shown to improve DED symptoms, data are scarce to show the impact on QoL, productivity, and healthcare utilization. With these limitations, it is even more important for clinicians to know about these management options, including when they are recommended.

Overall Educational Objectives

Upon completion of this educational activity, the participant should be able to:

- Recognize the prevalence and burden associated with DED
- Examine the etiology and pathophysiology of DED to better understand its impact on the patient, their quality of life, and disease progression
- Evaluate options available to manage DED and the risks and benefits associated with each of them

Activity Fee

Physician Fee: This activity is free of charge for physician participants requesting AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™].

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Type of activity: Knowledge

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