

## **BACKGROUNDER: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

### **A 6-Country Scan on Diabetic Eye Disease Educational Materials and Treatment Options**

There is a growing incidence of Canadians living with diabetes with more than twice as many people living with diabetes than in 2000. Those living with diabetes are 25 times more likely to experience vision loss and presently, over 1 million Canadians are living with diabetes-related eye damage. The increasing risk of vision loss due to complications related to diabetes underscores the urgent need to ensure all Canadians living with the disease have access to safe, effective, and appropriate treatment options for their condition and stay abreast of options as their condition changes over time.

Overall, however, there is limited patient education and resources on the available treatment options in Canada. To maintain vision and prevent progressive vision loss, it is crucial for Canadians at risk of diabetes-related vision complications to be educated and informed of available treatment options for common conditions, such as diabetic retinopathy (DR) and diabetic macular edema (DME), which can lead to vision impairment or even blindness.

In January 2022, the International Federation on Ageing conducted research to gather data on diabetic eye disease educational materials in Canada and six other countries (Australia, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and the UK) with the aim of identifying elements of good practice, as well as potential gaps and barriers to the successful uptake of the educational materials.

The results of this study find that patient educational materials must be comprehensive and disseminated through multiple channels, messages should be developed with consideration of at-risk populations, and educational information should be provided by various sources to maximize impact.

The treatment options for diabetic eye diseases have changed dramatically in recent years as new therapeutics have emerged. It is important that patient education includes all the available treatment options such as laser therapy, anti-VEGFs (e.g., Ranibizumab) and steroid implants (e.g., dexamethasone and fluocinolone) which are relatively new and have proven to be effective in cases where anti-VEGF injections do not work completely or stop working.

Read the full report of the study [here](#).

**MEDIA CONTACT: Bruna Swerts, Director of Strategic Communications | [bswerts@ifa.ngo](mailto:bswerts@ifa.ngo)**

The [International Federation on Ageing](#) (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Nearly 50 years old, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people. Through the IFA's formal relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and general consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies, the IFA is in the position to advocate directly with member states and contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue.

