

Changing patterns in diagnosis, referral, and management of uveal melanoma over the past three decades

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The evolving role of optometrists in primary eye care and advances in diagnostic technology have changed the mode of detection and management of uveal melanoma (UM) over the past decades. This study aimed to explore these changes and their potential impact on patient and tumour characteristics.

Methods: A retrospective chart review was conducted on all patients consecutively diagnosed with UM between 1993 and 2022. Data on the mode of presentation, diagnosis, and treatment, as well as relevant patient and tumour characteristics, were analysed descriptively and for temporal trends over the 30-year period.

Results: A total of 409 patients were included. The mean age at diagnosis was 63.4 years. The mean largest basal tumour diameter and thickness were 12.4 mm and 6.2 mm, respectively. Two hundred sixty-two patients (64%) experienced symptoms associated with UM, with a mean duration of 6.3 months prior to diagnosis. Among the 147 asymptomatic patients (36%), UM was incidentally detected by fundus photography in 52 patients, by CT/MRI in 6 patients, and during examination for unrelated eye conditions in 89 patients. More detailed data and time trends will be presented.

Conclusions: Over the study period, UM tended to be smaller and more peripherally located at the time of diagnosis. There was a reduction in the time from first symptom to diagnosis, and despite an increasing population age, the mean patient age at diagnosis gradually decreased. These findings may be partly explained by the introduction of wide-field fundus cameras in the early 2000s and a rise in opportunistic screening of asymptomatic patients.