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In-Depth Report from The Vision Council Unveils the Realities of Life with Low Vision

New Focused inSights research features survey and focus group findings from patients with low vision as well as parents of children with low vision

Alexandria, Va., June 24, 2024—Today, [The Vision Council](#) released a new research report featuring a comprehensive analysis of the experiences, diagnoses, information sources and treatment options for patients with low vision, as well as the impact on their caregivers. The report, **Focused inSights 2024: Low Vision**, combines qualitative data from two focus groups with quantitative data from a nationally representative survey of patients and primary caregivers of children with low vision.

“We’re proud to issue our latest Focused inSights report and present a valuable window into the lives of people living with low vision,” said **Alysse Henkel, Vice President of Research and inSights at The Vision Council**. “Through a mixed-method research approach, including two focus groups and a survey of 101 U.S. patients and caregivers, we set out to better understand the patient experience with low vision, especially in terms of how they learn about their condition and how they navigate finding specialists and treatment options. By understanding their challenges and needs, the vision community can work towards improving access to specialists, information, and awareness of effective treatments, ensuring a better quality of life for those living with low vision.”

Key findings:

- **Diagnosis and Referral:** Most patients are diagnosed by eyecare professionals (90 percent), with optometrists and ophthalmologists playing a crucial role. However, referrals to low vision specialists are underutilized, particularly for those diagnosed more than 10 years ago.
- **Information Sources:** Doctors remain the primary source of information for 72 percent of patients, still, patients and caregivers increasingly use online resources like search engines (48 percent) and websites focused on low vision (34 percent), highlighting the need for clear and accessible online information.
- **Terminology:** While the term "low vision" is generally understood by patients and caregivers, and 62 percent of respondents believe that accurately describes their condition, some prefer alternative terms. This highlights the need for more nuanced language to describe the varying experiences of patients.
- **Treatment Options and Challenges:** Patients report having access to diverse treatments and assistive technologies, but one in five patients faced challenges in finding specialists.
- **Impact on Daily Life:** Blurred vision, difficulty in low light, and reading problems are common symptoms leading to significant lifestyle adjustments and emotional challenges.

A free summary of the report is available for download on The Vision Council Foundation website [here](#). The full report is available for download in The Vision Council's [Research Download Center](#). It is complimentary for members of The Vision Council, with a paid option for non-members.

About Low Vision

Low vision is a visual impairment resulting in central vision loss, peripheral vision loss, difficulty seeing in low light, and/or blurry vision that makes it difficult for individuals to perform everyday activities like reading, driving, using computer screens or navigating in darkness. According to the CDC's National Health Interview Survey in 2022, 18.4 percent of U.S. adults have difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses or contacts. Low vision can be caused by several conditions including age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy, among others, and can impact people at any age.

The Vision Council Foundation, the philanthropic arm of The Vision Council dedicated to helping people everywhere to see and look their best through public eye health education and optical industry career training support, recommends that all individuals with a permanent reduction in vision receive treatment from two eye doctors—their medical eye doctor to manage the visual disorder, and a low vision doctor to maximize their vision by prescribing low vision aids.

“Whether individuals are born with a visual impairment or developed vision loss later in life, not seeing well in today’s visually oriented world can have immense impact on one’s life,” said **Henry Greene, OD, FAAO, Co-Founder and President of Ocutech, Inc. and Board Member of The Vision Council**. “Modern low vision technology can help to alleviate many of the social and day-to-day seeing challenges that individuals with reduced vision may face and can help individuals regain independence and inspire them to re-engage in social activities where they once felt disconnected. Acquiring low vision aids through the care of a low vision specialist can dramatically impact an individual at all stages of their lives – from schooling, to careers, to their social life and retirement years.”

Learn more about low vision and low vision aids [here](#).

For assistance finding a low vision specialist, access The Vision Council Foundation's [Low Vision Prescriber Network](#).

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About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence and safety, better vision leads to better lives.

About The Vision Council Foundation

As the philanthropic foundation of The Vision Council, The Vision Council Foundation empowers people everywhere to see and look their best through public eye health education and optical industry career training support. A 501c3 charitable nonprofit organization, the Foundation is dedicated to ensuring better vision for better lives.