SCREENING FOR GLAUCOMA IN THE PRIMARY CARE SETTING

POCKET GUIDE

Glaucoma Risk Factors and Severity of Risk

Severity of Risk	Persence of Risk Factors	Frequency of Eye Exams	
	Age, Ethnicity Family Hx	*Prior Eye Exam**	*No Prior Eye Exam*
High	All 3	Annually	3 months
Moderate	Any 2	Annually	6 months
Low	Just 1	Every 2 years	1year

* 2 or 3 risk factors: exam within past year. 1 risk factor: exam within last 2 years.

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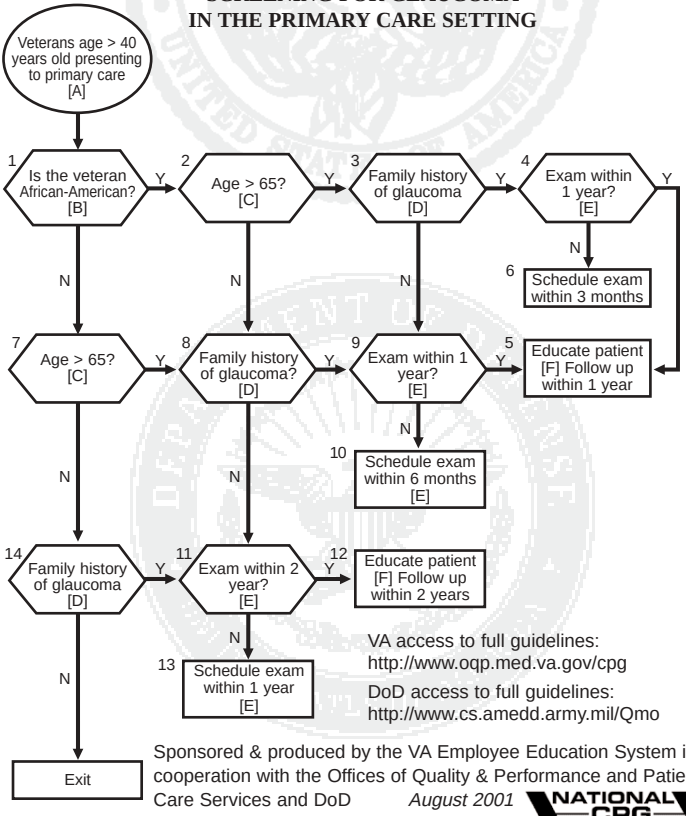

VA access to full guidelines:
http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg

DoD access to full guidelines:
http://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/Qmo

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Glaucoma affects at least 2 million people in the United States. It is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States and the leading cause of blindness in the African-American community. The key to successful treatment of glaucoma is early diagnosis. The most effective screening method relies on primary care providers identifying and referring their high-risk patients, or patients in an early stage of this disease, to an eye care specialist.

Screen Veterans 40 Years of Age or Older for Risk of Developing Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a neuropathy associated with:

- Optic nerve abnormalities
- Excavation of the optic disc
- Changes in the visual field
- Usually elevated intraocular pressure

Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) is the most common presentation of glaucoma. In POAG, the chamber angle (drainage region) is physically open but "clogged" with extra-cellular debris, resulting in a backup of aqueous fluid.

Screen Veteran African-Americans

The prevalence of POAG in the general population is approximately 2 percent. In the African-American community, it is *four to five times higher.*

African-Americans, when compared with non-African-Americans, present with:

- Glaucoma at an earlier age
- Greater optic nerve damage
- Higher intraocular pressures

Screen Veterans 65 Years of Age and Older

Age is a risk factor for POAG. Although the prevalence of this disease increases with each decade of life, the largest differential occurs between the 7th and 8th decades. The importance of age is particularly striking in the African-American community, where the prevalence of glaucoma increases from 3.14% in persons less than 60 years of age, to 12.2% in persons over 70 years.

Screen Veterans with a Family History of Glaucoma

Persons with a history of glaucoma in a first-degree relative have almost three times the risk of developing glaucoma themselves compared to the general population (age-adjusted odds ratio = 2.85). A first-degree relative is defined as a *parent, sibling,* or *child.* The relative-risk varies depending upon the degree of consanguinity of the family member involved. The strongest association occurs with siblings and the weakest with children

Educate Veterans At-Risk for Developing Glaucoma

- Existing personal risk factors predisposing the development of glaucoma
- Rationale behind the need for periodic evaluations
- Need for careful and regular follow-up appointments
- Periodic review of the chronic, asymptomatic signs and symptoms of glaucoma