



The Eyes and Vision Specialist Library (EVSL) National Library for Health (NLH)

www.library.nhs.uk

- bibliographic databases and contents tables to support research – often linked to a document delivery service or full content access
- collections of full-text e-journals and e-books
- a comprehensive search engine
- current awareness services
- clinical question answering
- a range of national and local services provided by skilled library staff.

The Eyes and Vision Specialist Library (EVSL) is one of 24 specialist libraries commissioned by the NLH, and was launched on World Sight Day, October 2005. It has been developed primarily to serve health care professionals involved in delivering eye health care (e.g. GP, casualty officer/ PRO /SHO, high street optometrist, ophthalmologists, nurses, orthoptists etc.). Its purpose is to find, organise and present the best currently available evidence relevant to eye health. It serves to “sign post” eye health professionals and generalists to this information, to support and inform their clinical practice.

It provides access to online resources. These resources have so far concentrated on the material produced, commissioned or licensed by the NHS (e.g. Clinical Evidence, Health Technology Assessment reports, NICE guidelines, National Service Frameworks, Centre for Reviews and Dissemination abstracts, the Cochrane Library, Prodigy); as well as national and international professional body publications (Royal College of Ophthalmologists, American Academy of Ophthalmology etc.) Additionally key research findings (as presented in peer-reviewed articles) that have informed / shaped contemporary clinical thinking and practice are continually being added to the library. The range of topics currently covered includes those conditions usually seen in routine clinical practice for which there is an established body of quality specialist literature.

There are vast amounts of health-related information, of variable quality, available from many sources and in many places, being churned out with alarming frequency. Trying to just keep up with these is hard enough, but then trying to have the information you're looking for, ready to hand (tracing it and accessing it) when you want it, is often even harder and time consuming. Sound familiar?

The National Library for Health (NLH) is an online digital library and information service that is readily accessible, 24/7 to any healthcare professional wherever they practice, whenever they need it. Its purpose is to bring together trusted, authoritative information resources in one place, providing seamless access to the best, currently available evidence wherever, and whenever, it is needed; enabling its users to find high quality information quickly and easily to inform healthcare decisions. Its objective is to bridge the gap between what is known and what is done, by getting knowledge into practice at the place and time it is needed.

The National Library for Health offers a wide range of services which include:

- specialist libraries – these provide web-based collections containing clinical and non-clinical information on the major health priority areas
- clinical information and summaries of evidence to support clinical practice

Topics are presented anatomically and the multi-professional evidence-based resources under each category are organized as:

- Guidance and pathways
- Evidence
- Reference
- Education / CPD
- Patient information
- News / Events

Quality is a key issue for the Eyes and Vision Specialist Library and its content has been developed and collated under the guidance of an External Reference Group of stakeholders from the community of professional, academic, voluntary and patient organisations in eye health care, which include the following:

- Royal College of Ophthalmologists
- Royal College of Nursing – Ophthalmic Nurses Forum
- College of Optometrists
- British and Irish Orthoptic Society
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Clinical Evidence
- Cochrane Collaboration
- Prodigy
- Royal National Institute for the Blind
- National Library for Health
- UCL-Institute of Ophthalmology / Moorfields Eye Hospital Joint Library

Explicit search strategies are used, to compile, appraise, maintain and update the resources, and all are subject to BIOME-based quality appraisal prior to their inclusion in the EVSL.

Continuing expansion of the EVSL content – clearly this will be an ongoing activity. At the moment, the content represents the baseline or “prevalence” of clinical evidence / knowledge that is currently available. So far this has:

- Identified gaps in the existing knowledge base and these have begun to inform research priorities and professional guidance development.
- Affirmed and highlighted the limitations to on-line access to ophthalmic journals; and has informed the procurement process by the NLH for these resources.

The challenge ahead will be to keep the EVSL responsive and relevant to clinical practice and health care, through its management and presentation of new developments in technologies and research findings i.e. the “incidence” of new knowledge. The following approaches will be developed:

- An Editorial Panel will be established. Its principal role will be to identify and prioritise clinical areas / topics of interest, and provide on-line editorials “sign-posting” users of the library to new evidence and topical issues as they arise.
- Knowledge updates will be performed on highlighted topics / policy areas. For example, on developments arising between the publication of professional body/NICE guidelines and their formal review.
- Contributing to the NLH programme of Knowledge Weeks. These are aimed at raising awareness of a particular clinical topic / condition, together with its evidence base.

The bigger picture – how does all this fit in with Connecting for Health (CfH)?

The NLH is part of CfH’s knowledge, process and safety programme, and is being closely integrated with its programme of development and implementation of IT systems and services in the NHS. Work is underway to give users access to the library from the NHS Care Records Service, providing healthcare professionals with seamless access to the information and know-how to support their treatment recommendations/decision making.

This is a site for anyone involved in eye health care - and worth a look !

It is possible that it may not have the answers to all of your questions yet..... but as it is continuously evolving its content will grow and change with the acquisition of knowledge. Feedback so far suggests that EVSL has been well received and used by a range of health care professionals. Nevertheless, your input and feedback will be invaluable to ensure that ongoing development and improvements in the content and its organisation within the library are user-driven, and responsive to your needs and your practice.

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