INAHTA Briefs

Issue 2007/51

Title **Visual Mobility Aids for Patients With Night Blindness**

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Reference 06-09. ISBN 978-2-550-48413-4 (printed French edition),
2-550-48752-4 (English summary, PDF).
www.aetmis.gouv.qc.ca/site/index.php?fr_publications_2006

Aim

To determine whether Night Vision Aids (NVAs) should be included in the Visual Devices Program administered by the provincial public health insurance plan.

Conclusions and results

Night visions devices, such as the wide-angle mobility light (WAML) and NVAs, can, despite certain limitations, effectively help certain individuals with night blindness by making it safer for them to travel in low-illumination conditions. On the other hand, night vision goggles (NVGs) are still in the experimental stage. For these night vision assistive devices to be as useful as possible, they should be allocated and their use monitored by orientation and mobility specialists within the context of a personalized intervention. The intervention should include, eg, a pre-allocation assessment of the needs of the user, appropriate training, a trial period with the device, and regular followup assessments. Problems accessing these different devices in Québec could be resolved with a public program such as the Visual Devices Program. Lastly, this report emphasizes the need to continue efforts to collect and share data to better identify the conditions for optimal night-vision aid utility.

Recommendations

AETMIS recommends that the eligibility requirements of the Visual Devices Program take into account all of the aspects of vision affected by night blindness; that the Ministry of Health and Social Services, after consulting its partners, make NVAs and mobility light accessible to individuals with night blindness and, when the necessary conditions are met, take steps to include these devices in the list of aids available in the Visual Devices program; that the allocation of these devices and the monitoring of their use be supervised by professionals working in Québec rehabilitation facilities; and that these facilities collect data on the clinical utility of night vision devices and draw the necessary conclusions from these data to improve the services offered.

Methods

A scientific literature search was conducted in different databases, including MEDLINE (PubMed) and the INAHTA database. The report provides a complete review of the relevant studies that were selected. In addition, several websites were consulted to identify the commercially available products and the resources available for people with night blindness. Also, interviews were conducted to describe the situation in Québec regarding the use of night vision assistive devices.

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ISSN 1654-501X