**Introduction**

A partnership between a patient group (Birdshot Uveitis Society) and medical staff at three different hospitals in the UK and France endeavoured to create a patient day for patients and their supporters with Birdshot Chorioretinopathy. Medical students were granted a role in the organisation, running the evaluation of the day and interpreting the results. This allowed the students a unique opportunity of learning with patients at the heart of the process.

**Birdshot Chorioretinopathy (BCR)** is a rare form of posterior uveitis that results to be bilateral. BCR is often diagnosed late due to poor awareness of this devastating condition. Without treatment, permanent visual loss is a common sequela. BCR has no cure, the aim of treatment being to slow progression. This is a chronic and progressive disease with patients suffering from the debilitating effects of the disease in addition to the side effects of the aggressive medications used to treat it.

**The Birdshot Patient Day: 12th September 2010**

125 people attended the Birdshot patient day, including 50 patients and 25 supporters from across the country and 50 health care professionals.

**Objectives**

- To raise awareness of this disease
- To reduce patient isolation from this rare disorder
- To improve two-way communication between health care professionals and patients
- To improve patient outcome
- To provide a platform for research

**Conclusion**

- To provide a platform for research
- To reduce patient isolation from this rare disorder
- To raise awareness of this disease

**125 people attended the Birdshot patient day, including 50 patients and 25 supporters from across the country and 50 health care professionals.**

**What do you think would make the most difference to your quality of life?**

**Answer:** Fewer side effects from drugs

**What do you think future research should concentrate on?**

**Answer:** Finding out the cause of the disease

**Reflections from Patients**

“I no longer feel like a ‘Tongtroller’ patient. I feel I now have a future, and more importantly, that anyone related to me has a real chance of being diagnosed and treated effectively, should they get Birdshot. Long live ‘Team Birdshot’ - you have literally saved my life.” Patient with Birdshot & organiser member

The day was excellent, and I believe has most likely made a positive improvement to the lives of some of the sufferers, and I guess that’s the best result you can hope for.” Patient with Birdshot

**Reflections from Medical Students**

“The Birdshot Patient Day was not only a day in its isolation, but a whole project which has provided me with invaluable skills and memories. Being involved as a medical student in the organisation of the event from its very outset allowed me to see it grow from an animated vision to reality. In preparation of the day, we were given concrete tasks – such as generating means of evaluating the day and to investigate the, possibly differing, views of patients and healthcare professionals on various Birdshot related themes. With these tangible goals in mind, we quickly became clear how important mutual understanding and effective communication are in order to decrease needless medical errors and to improve the doctor-patient relationship. This innovative strategy of engaging medical students in patient days can be applied on a much broader scale and I personally feel that it should be something that more students have the opportunity to pursue – both for our own and future patients’ benefit.”

**As a basis for medical education it taught us about a novel way of enhancing patient care, providing support for patients, their relatives and the professionals looking after them, decreasing medical errors by increasing awareness of the disease (and the potentially toxic drugs used to treat it) and optimising the strength of the doctor-patient relationship. Through this effort as medical students we have not only learnt about the disease, but enhanced our communication, organisational and evaluation skills. We have discussed with patients and professionals the problems of caring for patients who have a chronic visually disabling disease (for which there is no cure) and understood the disease from the patients’ point of view.”

**Acknowledgments**

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**Birdshot Chorioretinopathy – A bird’s eye view**

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**References**

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**Monitoring the Birdshot Patient Day**

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**Photographs from Birdshot Patient Day**

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