Response to letter: COVID-19 and macular edema—a necessary blindness?

Jean-François Korobelnik^{1,2} · on behalf of the Vision Academy Steering Committee

Received: 2 July 2020 / Revised: 2 July 2020 / Accepted: 8 July 2020 / Published online: 18 July 2020
© Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature 2020

Dear Editor,

We certainly agree with Navel et al. that ophthalmologists have faced difficult decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic and that a delicate balance is needed to protect both lives and vision. In order to strike this balance, it is important that all decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the local infection rate and individual risk for loss of visual acuity. We believe that strategies for managing patients with retinal disease during this uncertain time should focus on the following:

- Minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for both the patient and healthcare staff
- Simplifying anti-vascular endothelial growth factor treatment regimens
- Prioritizing treatment for those at greatest risk of irreversible vision loss

By implementing stringent safety practices and triaging those who are most vulnerable, we have the opportunity to continue to provide the best possible care to patients.

With lockdown restrictions now easing in many countries, we are re-evaluating our initial guidance [1] to determine which measures can be relaxed while the infection rate remains low and which should remain in place until a suitable vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 becomes available. The

updated guidance for the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and for the post-lockdown era will be available from <https://www.visionacademy.org/>.

Funding information Writing and editorial assistance was provided by Hollie Robinson, PhD of Complete HealthVizion, Ltd., McCann Health Medical Communications, funded by Bayer Consumer Care AG, Pharmaceuticals, Basel, Switzerland.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest Jean-François Korobelnik is a consultant for Allergan, Bayer, Kanghong, Novartis, and Roche.

Reference

1. Korobelnik JF, Loewenstein A, Eldem B, Jousen AM, Koh A, Lambrou GN, Lanzetta P, Li X, Lövestam-Adrian M, Navarro R, Okada AA, Pearce I, Rodríguez FJ, Wong DT, Wu L (2020) Guidance for anti-VEGF intravitreal injections during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Graefes Arch Clin Exp Ophthalmol* 258:1149–1156. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00417-020-04703-x>

Publisher's note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

✉ Jean-François Korobelnik
jean-francois.korobelnik@chu-bordeaux.fr

¹ Service d'ophtalmologie, CHU Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

² Inserm, Bordeaux Population Health Research Center, team LEHA, Université de Bordeaux, UMR 1219, F-33000 Bordeaux, France