

Orthoptic Department - Stroke Patient Information Visual Field Defect

What is a Visual Field Defect?

A visual field defect is when part of an object may be missing; this can vary from a very small area to a larger section missing.

When the defect is due to stroke the patient (most commonly) will experience seeing half of everything. This is termed a Homonymous Hemianopia.

Homonymous Hemianopia:

This is when the damage affects both eyes to the same side, i.e., in a Right Homonymous Hemianopia, the right eye would get a field defect to the right and the left eye would also get a field defect to the right. This would mean that the patient would not be seeing anything to the right-hand side.

This visual field loss to one side can be a total or partial loss.

Total vision loss would mean that nothing is seen to the affected side:

Partial vision loss would mean that vision is reduced to one side:

Problems a Homonymous Hemianopia could cause:

- Misplacing or ignoring objects to one side
- Problems reading as words at the beginning, or the end of a line may not be present
- Bumping into things and more clumsiness to one side

How do we assess a Field Defect?

The Orthoptist will plot a visual field using a Goldmann Field machine.

This plots what the patient sees in the periphery and will show the Orthoptist if the patient has a Homonymous Hemianopia.

How can the Orthoptist help?

As the field defect is to one side, a stick-on prism (Fresnel) can be used to try and bring the seeing area to a more central position so that the patient has a wider field of vision.

The Orthoptist can also offer general advice to make it a little easier to cope.

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