

July 3, 2008

## Important Clinical Information!

Dear VSP Network Doctor:

**We want to alert you to some important clinical news about the drug Flomax®** and its potential impact on cataract patients. According to a new survey, many members of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) believe that intraoperative floppy iris syndrome (IFIS) associated with alpha blockers such as tamsulosin (Flomax®) increases cataract surgery risks.

David F. Chang, MD, chair of the ASCRS Cataract Clinical Committee, says "We're not presenting the member survey as a level I scientific study. However, it does provide a snapshot of cataract surgeons' clinical experience with IFIS and points to their diversity of opinions and experiences with a variety of surgical problems that alpha blockers cause." In the study, 59% of survey respondents would recommend an eye exam for patients with a history of cataracts or decreased vision prior to initiating treatment with tamsulosin.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and ASCRS are issuing a joint educational update statement to over 200,000 Primary Care Physicians (PCP) nationwide this month. Details are available on the American Optometric Association's Web site at [www.aoa.org/Floppy-Iris.xml](http://www.aoa.org/Floppy-Iris.xml).

### What does this mean to you?

You could see an increase in referrals for eye examinations from local PCPs planning to prescribe Flomax to patients at risk for cataracts. And, cataract patients already taking Flomax may ask questions regarding increased risks or complications with cataract surgery.

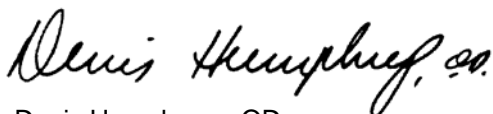
### What can you do?

We recommend that you:

- **Read the survey and statement** published by ASCRS and AAO to learn more. It's available in the ASCRS current monthly journal and on AOA's Web site at [www.aoa.org/Floppy-Iris.xml](http://www.aoa.org/Floppy-Iris.xml).
- **Contact local ophthalmologists** that you refer cataract patients to for surgery to discuss their preferences for managing these patients and how this might affect your referral protocol.
- **Talk to cataract patients** taking Flomax and reassure them. Cataract patients taking alpha blockers still have an excellent prognosis with cataract surgery, but it's imperative that the operating surgeon is aware that the patient is taking these drugs and may have IFIS.
- **Keep your patients' PCP informed** of important findings from eye exams you perform of those either on the drug or planning to take it. You can use the VSP PCP Communication Form available on VSPOnline at [eyefinity.com](http://eyefinity.com) to communicate with your patient's PCP about their condition and your recommendations regarding cataract surgery.

We hope that you've found this information useful. VSP appreciates the great care that you provide to your patients and we want to support you by keeping you well informed of issues that can impact you, your practice, and your patients. We're proud to be able to work in partnership with the AAO, the ASCRS, and the AOA to educate PCPs, ophthalmologists, and optometrists about IFIS.

Sincerely,



Denis Humphreys, OD  
VSP Optometry Director



Mark Schneider, MD  
VSP Medical Director