

## MODULE 8.0

## Introduction: DR/DME Classifications

**B**oth diabetic retinopathy (DR) and diabetic macular edema (DME) are defined by clinical classifications. In this Module, you will learn about:

- Focal/Diffuse DME
- DR Severity Scale
- Proposed Phenotypes of DR/DME

**Introduction**

DR is classified as either proliferative or nonproliferative.

The most common form of DR is nonproliferative diabetic retinopathy (NPDR). This condition occurs when tiny blood vessels in the retina swell and form pouches, or

microaneurysms, that begin to block blood vessels in the retina.<sup>1</sup> The most serious stage of retinopathy is proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR), in which fluid and blood leak into the retina, blur vision, and, if left untreated, cause severe vision loss.<sup>1</sup>

There are two types of DME: focal and diffuse.<sup>2</sup>

Focal DME is the most common and less severe form.<sup>2</sup> Diffuse DME is a less common but more severe form that can be difficult to manage.<sup>3</sup> The risk of developing diffuse DME increases with the severity of DR.<sup>4</sup>

**References**

1. American Diabetes Association. Living with diabetes: eye complications. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/eye-complications/>. Last edited November 1, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2015.
2. Browning DJ, Altaweel MM, Bressler NM, et al. Diabetic macular edema: what is focal and what is diffuse? *Am J Ophthalmol*. 2008;146:649-655.
3. Lopes de Faria JM, Jalkh AE, Trempe CL, et al. Diabetic macular edema: risk factors and concomitants. *Acta Ophthalmol Scand*. 1999;77:170-175.
4. Bhagat N, Grigorian RA, Tutela A, et al. Diabetic macular edema: pathogenesis and treatment. *Surv Ophthalmol*. 2009;54:1-32.