# Introduction

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness worldwide with a prevalence of over 2 million in those aged 40 years and older in the United States.1–3 As the U.S. population continues to age, the prevalence of glaucoma is projected to reach 3 million by the year 2020.3

Vision loss due to glaucoma has traditionally been described as loss of “peripheral vision”; that is, loss of vision at the outer edges.4–7 Current educational Web sites for the general public illustrate the loss of vision in glaucoma as “tunnel vision” or as if one is “looking through a straw” (Figure 1).8 However, glaucomatous vision loss may involve not only narrowing of the visual field (VF) but also deterioration in the quality of vision.9–13 Several studies have demonstrated that in addition to VF losses, deterioration of contrast sensitivity and color discrimination can occur early in the disease process.10–12 Additionally, patients may report other visual symptoms due to glaucoma, such as blurriness, dimness or cloudiness.

Loss of peripheral vision for 1 eye indicates diminished vision toward the edges of the VF of that eye (Figures 2A and 2B). However, anecdotally, most people with binocular vision consider their peripheral vision to be sight to the right and left side of their body (Figure 2C). Patients do not consider nasal visual loss as “peripheral.” Temporal areas of the VFs are areas most people consider peripheral vision, yet the temporal areas of the VF are lost late in the course of glaucoma.14,15 These linguistic discrepancies further complicate the description of peripheral visual loss in patients with glaucoma.

The goal of this prospective study was to assess the visual symptoms described by patients with glaucoma. Currently, there are no objective methods to assess what patients experience subjectively. Although quality of life measures address physical symptoms,16,17 there are no tools to consider visual symptoms in detail. Our study aimed to improve our understanding of how glaucoma affects vision from the patients’ point of view by asking specific detailed questions about how they see. A **secondary** objective of the study was to correlate severity of VF loss with visual symptoms reported.