

Anti-VEGF injections in Portugal: the first decade 2007-2017

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Introduction

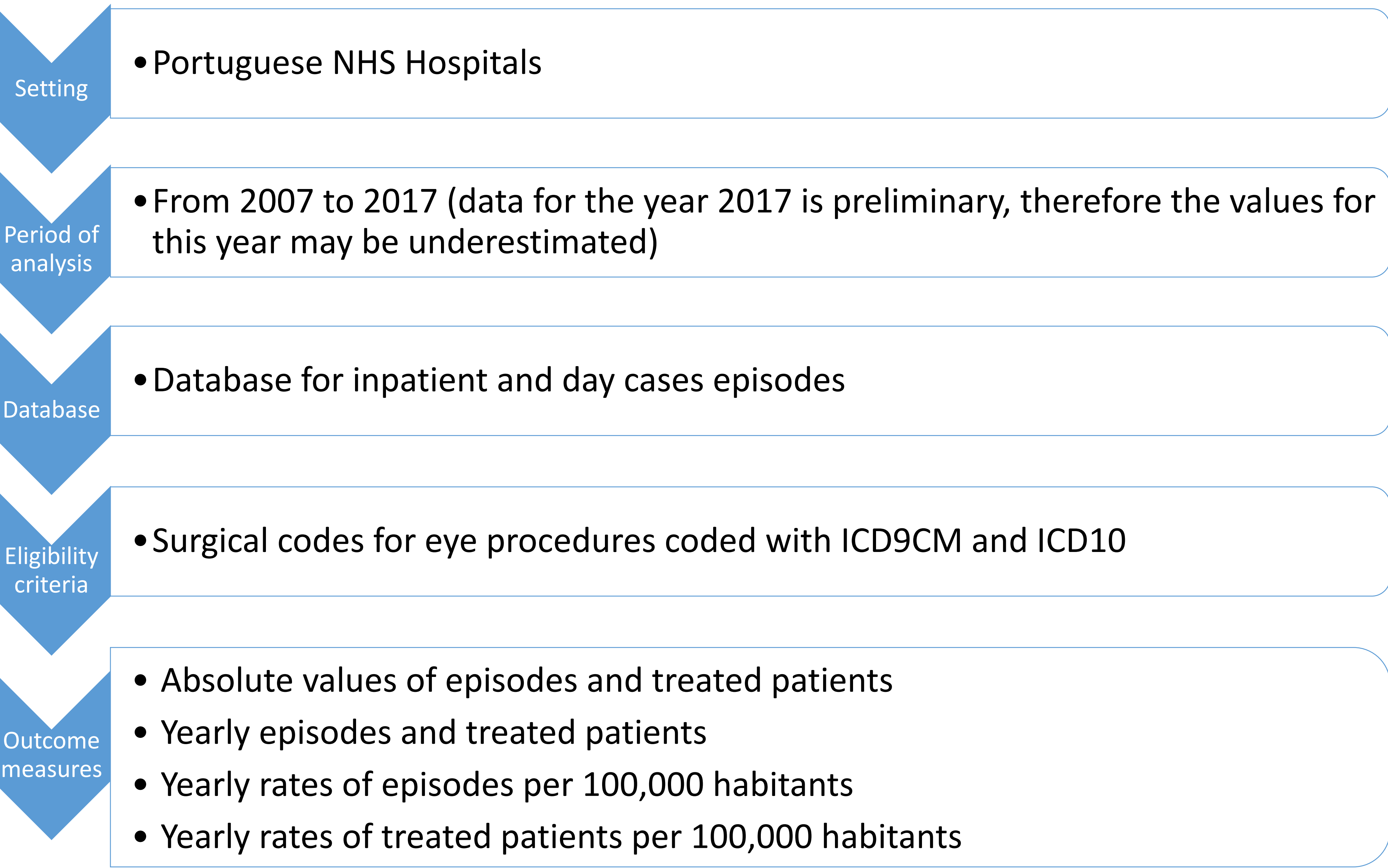
- Antivascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) intravitreal injections are sight saving treatments for patients with neovascular age-related macular degeneration (nAMD), diabetic macular edema (DME), retinal vein occlusion (RVO) and other indications [1,2,3].
- Anti-VEGFs were licensed for the treatment of nAMD by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in 2007.
- Since 2008 that they have been covered by the Portuguese National Health Service (NHS) [4].

Objectives

- The aim of this study was to examine the dissemination of anti-VEGFs injections in the Portuguese NHS.

Methods

We used an administrative database of inpatient and day cases stays from all Portuguese NHS hospitals during the period of 2007 - 2017.



Results

The sample included 319,320 episodes and 131,816 patients from 2007 to 2017. Patients had a mean age of 68.0 years (standard deviation = 13.9) and 50.0% were men.

Figure 1 - Annual number of hospital episodes of anti-VEGFs treatments and annual number of treated patients from 2007 to 2017

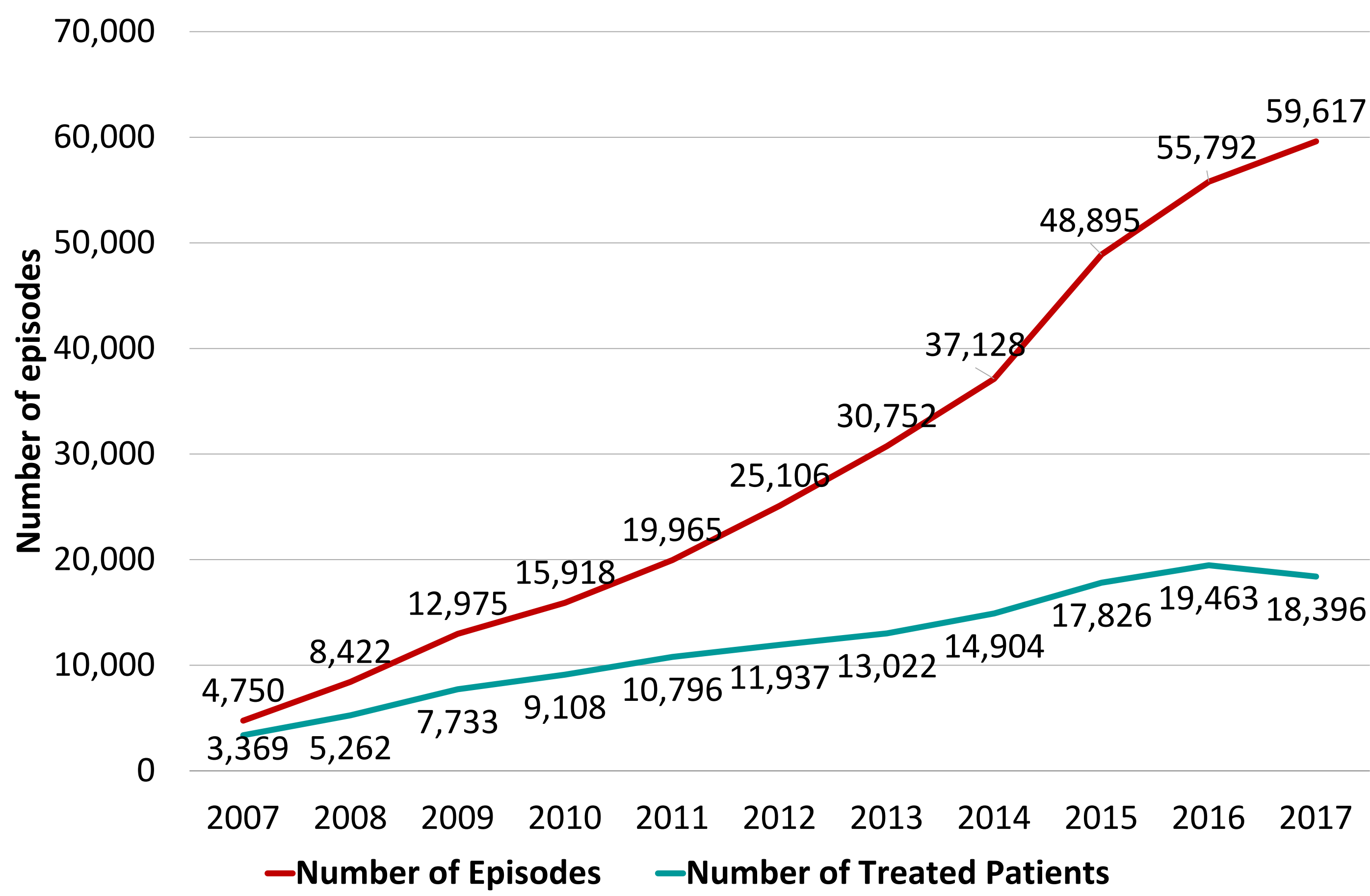


Figure 1 shows that the total number of episodes increased from 4,750 in 2007 to 59,617 in 2017. These values corresponded to a mean annual increase of episodes of 30%, to an increase in rates of episodes related to anti-VEGFs from 47.3 to 568.8 per 100,000 habitants and to an increase of rates of treated patients from 33.6 to 187.9 per 100,000 habitants.

Figure 2 - Annual number of hospital episodes and treated patients by diagnoses from 2007 to 2017

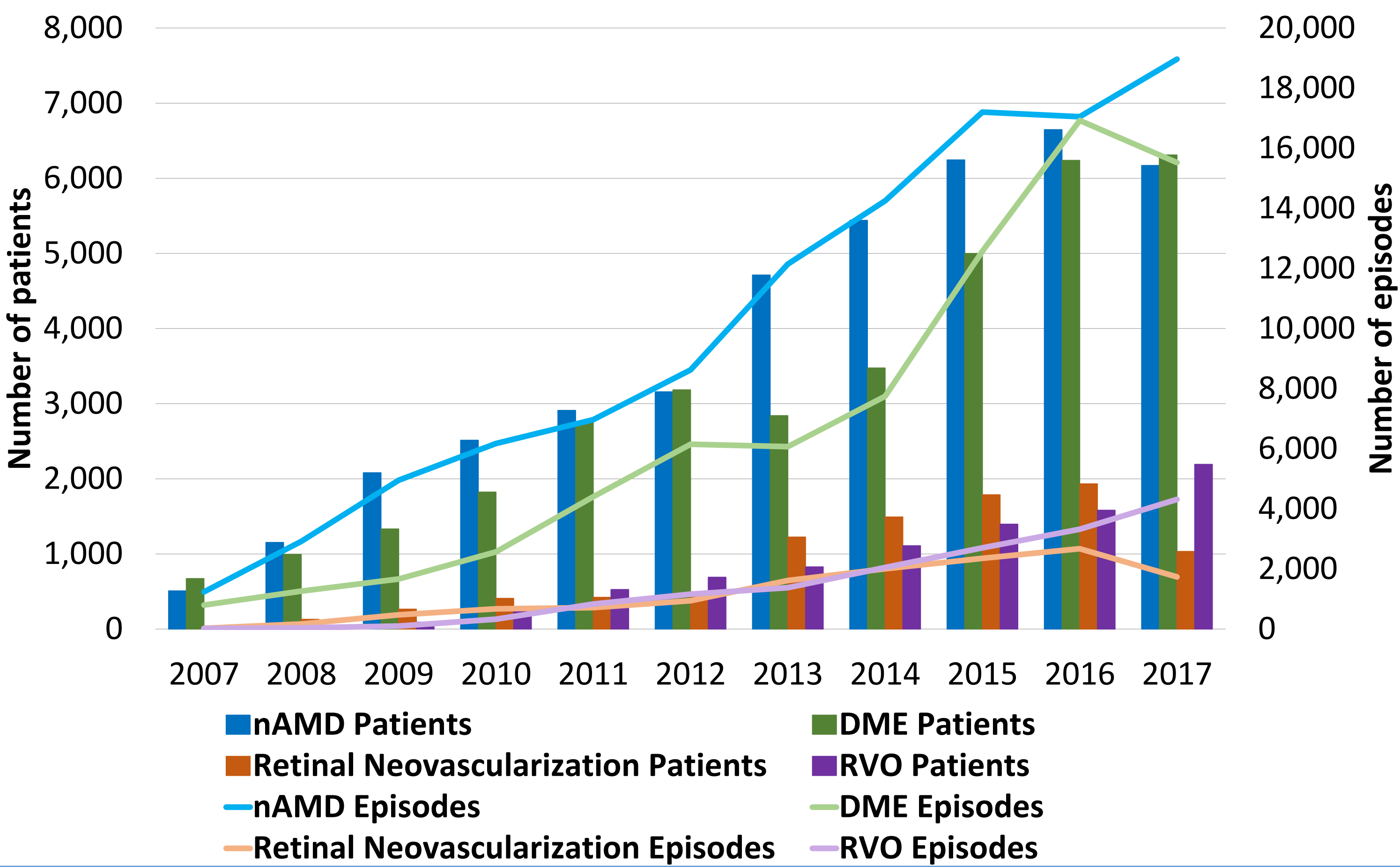


Figure 2 shows that nAMD and DME are the two most frequent diagnoses associated with anti-VEGF treatments. The four diagnoses analyzed have shown increase in trends for number of episodes and patients for most of the analyzed period.

Conclusion

The number of procedures related with anti-VEGF treatments grew exponentially since its approval. These events can impose challenges to the NHS in terms of budget and access. Planning the dissemination of innovative treatments is important to ensure these interventions are available to all people that can benefit from it.

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