

# Increasing wearers key at 2017 Congress on Contact Lens Education



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**T**ranslating contact lens knowledge into increasing contact lens penetration' was the theme of the 2017 Congress on Contact Lens Education, organised by the International Association of Contact Lens Educators (IACLE) in Hyderabad on 9 and 10 September 2017. The meet was timed to precede the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Optometry (11 to 13 September) held in the city, also featured in this issue of The Indian Optician.

The CLE Congress provided some answers to the important question: What can CL educators do to help increase the number of contact lenses around the world? Featured were a combination of updates on the latest thinking on contact lens management, and practical ways to improve teaching and assessment techniques.

More than 100 delegates from 20 countries – educators, industry representatives, IACLE board and staff – gathered at the L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), thanks to the generous support of industry partners Alcon, CooperVision and Johnson & Johnson Vision. An important initiative during the event was the new Professor Deborah Sweeny Chair in Contact Lenses, instituted by the LVPEI.

While CL educators have an essential role to play in ensuring students have the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to fit contact lenses, they must also equip them to communicate the benefits to patients including how to continue wearing them successfully.

Dr Etty Bitton and IACLE president Dr Shehzad Naroo shared their top 10 tips for proactive contact lens education and wearer success. Advising patients that maintaining ocular surface health is their responsibility, emphasising the need for strict hygiene measures and the importance of aftercare were priorities.

The preliminary discussion of CLs with the patient was an opportunity to gain valuable information and build trust, said Dr Luigina Sorbara. Discuss myths versus realities, and then establish the patient's principal reason for wearing them and his/her expectations. Explain the available lens options, innovations and the many differences between products in material, design and fit before making a specific recommendation.

As many as nine in ten CL wearers did not comply fully with all the steps of lens wear and care instructions, said





Audience listening attentively to Dr. Shezad Naroo's presentation

Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan. Evaluate these and look at how compliance could be improved, she stressed.

Dr Lewis Williams and Nilesh Thite reviewed the many resources available from IACLE to support educators. The New IACLE Contact Lens Course has been fully revamped and updated; not for how and what should be taught but how to adapt it to suit their local needs. An additional module on Myopia Management would be added soon.

This year has seen research updates, monthly summaries of key papers published in peer-reviewed journals to help educators keep up to date with the latest developments and teach evidence-based practice. In 2018, the IACLE Distance Learning Program would be updated to match the New ICLC and help candidates prepare for IACLE Fellowship Exam. January 2018 would mark the launch of a new IACLE Image Collection for teaching use.

Dr Lakshmi Shinde described a pilot scheme in India to establish a common assessment pattern for students' practical assessment in CLs. The issues identified were difficulty distinguishing steep, flat and optimum lens fits, failure to record aspects of fit, and problems applying lenses. A key finding was that students needed to improve their 'soft skills' to interact with patients effectively.

Keratometry technique and communication ('reading' the patient and making them comfortable) were also common issues, but students' time management was the biggest concern, said Dr Shinde. Standard evaluation case sheets could be developed for use across the world and IACLE Fellows used as external examiners.

Professor Desmond Fonn reported that despite growth in the daily disposable (DD) modality and adoption of silicone hydrogel (SiHy) materials, the DD SiHy sector had not increased at the same rate as SiHy reusables. Perceived barriers to SiHy DDs included cost, lack of parameters, potential discomfort and allergic response. But the cost of some SiHy options was now similar to hydrogels, a wider range of parameters was available, there was no real difference in comfort, and silicone did not elicit a response from the immune system.

Professor Janice Jurkus outlined the potential market for presbyopic correction in India, where around 35 million people were aged 50 plus. Professor Monica Chaudhry looked at how to teach presbyopic CL fitting.

In the group exercises session to identify the challenges of teaching



## REPORT

CLs and share ideas for increasing CL wear worldwide, Professor Janice Jurkus and Dr Itar Beshwar described how it was taught in their respective institutions, in the US and Palestine. The discussion generated many suggestions for encouraging CL growth, with benefits for educators as well.

While some challenges – such as recruiting enough patients and a lack of specialised equipment – were common to many countries, others reported poor access to stock lenses and the need for a full range of lens options in their countries. Thus the industry has a clear role to play in supporting educators in research, and also in their clinics and labs.

Each of the industry representatives contributed a sponsor session. Alcon's Dr Dwight Akerman said the biggest challenge in CLs – lack of patients – was also the greatest opportunity. Increasing penetration from just over 2% of the world's population to twice that level would mean more investment in R&D, consumer outreach campaigns and educational support. Due to dropouts the number of wearers has stayed the same in recent years. Of the multiple reasons for dropouts, many patients were still wearing old-technology products and suffering from dryness and discomfort.

Dr Gary Orsborn of CooperVision reported that its latest product, MiSight 1 day, reduced myopic progression in children by 59% and axial length change by 52% over a three-year period compared to a control group.

Jack Chan of Johnson & Johnson Vision said his company's product focus was on addressing the specific needs of wearers. There were four segments of predominant needs based on lifestyle and physiology: eyes with sensitivities, challenging environments, maximised wear and eye enhancement.

Dr Naroo said key learnings were that educators needed to ensure their students had good product knowledge and improved fitting, aftercare and communication skills. Proactive recommendation and addressing dropout were all essential if more people were to wear CLs

and, importantly, keep wearing them.

The IACLE acknowledged the achievements of its members with the presentation of its Lifetime Achievement in CL Education Award to former president, Professor Deborah Sweeney, and the 2017 Asia-Pacific CL Educator of the Year Award to Professor Koon-Ja Lee from Korea.

The Congress provided an invaluable opportunity for educators from around the world to get together and share their experiences, and concluded with the take-home message: 'Let's get more lenses on more eyes'.

### IACLE at WCO Conference

IACLE delivered 50 presentations at the WCO, reviewed abstracts and acted as session moderators. Topics ranged from training in optometry and primary care to complex specialist fitting techniques.

Among the highlights was a symposium on the 'looming crises' of myopia. International speakers – including IACLE vice president Dr Luigina Sorbara – addressed the global increase in myopia prevalence and its economic impact, how to control the consequences for eye health, the mechanisms of myopia control and the optical, pharmacological and environmental interventions available.



2017 IACLE Congress group photograph