

# CONFERENCE



Over 100 delegates from 20 countries – educators, industry representatives, IACLE board and staff – met in Hyderabad for the IACLE Congress

## Getting more lenses on more eyes

What can contact lens educators do to help increase the number of contact lenses around the world? The 2017 Congress on Contact Lens Education, organised by the International Association of Contact Lens Educators held in Hyderabad, India in September, provided some answers

Contact lens educators have an essential role to play in ensuring students have the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to fit contact lenses. But they must also equip these future practitioners to communicate the benefits of contact lenses to patients and how to continue wearing them successfully.

'Let's get more lenses on more eyes' was the take-home message from the IACLE Congress on Contact Lens Education, held in Hyderabad, India, on September 9-10. The congress was timed to precede the 2nd World Congress of Optometry, also in Hyderabad, where IACLE provided the contact lens stream and was closely involved throughout the programme.

More than 100 delegates from 20 countries joined the IACLE Congress at the LV Prasad Eye Institute. The meeting was facilitated by IACLE thanks to the generous support of industry partners Alcon, CooperVision and Johnson & Johnson Vision.

The theme for the congress was 'Translating contact lens knowledge into increasing contact lens penetration'. The programme featured a combination of updates on the latest thinking on contact lens management, and practical ways to improve teaching and assessment techniques.

### TOP TIPS FOR CONTACT LENS SUCCESS

Dr Etty Bitton and Dr Shehzad Naroo opened with their top 10 tips for proactive contact lens education and wearer success. Patients should be educated that maintaining ocular surface health is their responsibility, emphasising the need for strict hygiene measures and the importance of aftercare. Contact lens-related infection is rare and patient factors such as poor handwashing, topping off solutions and extending lens wearing time or replacement interval, are modifiable behaviours. Strict storage case hygiene and avoidance of contact with tap water were particular concerns, said Dr Bitton.

Discomfort is the primary reason for dropout in established wearers and advancing age influences the reasons for discontinuation. Yet a recent study found poor vision is a more important factor than previously thought, and the most common reason for dropout in the first year of multifocal wear.

Evidence-based resources could help educate patients about healthy lens care habits, said Dr Naroo. Explain the known risks of buying lenses via the internet to wearers and emphasise the value of professional fitting, supply and aftercare.

### PROPER WORK-UP AND FOLLOW-UP

For Dr Luigina Sorbara, the preliminary discussion of contact lenses with the

patient was an opportunity to gain valuable information and build trust. Set the scene with facts about contact lenses (myths vs realities) then establish the patient's principal reason for wearing them and his/her expectations.

Discuss the available lens options with the patient before making a specific recommendation. Importantly, emphasise innovations in contact lenses and the many differences between products in material, design and fit.

Points to communicate should be tailored to lens type; when offering daily disposables, focus on the benefits rather than technical features and educate patients on the health benefits of the modality. With multifocals, explain that contact lenses offer vision in all directions of gaze, as well as at all distances.

Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan reviewed the importance of patient compliance to lens wear and care instructions, and looked at how compliance could be improved. As many as nine in 10 contact lens wearers did not comply fully with all steps, she said.

Among possible reasons for non-compliance were giving too much information in one session, or giving conflicting advice, as well as the risk-taking propensity of the patient. Saving money, time pressures, perceived lack of harm from non-compliance or simply forgetting instructions were other factors.

Daily disposables improved some aspects of compliance but were not the solution to all problems; some patients would reuse their lenses and, although very low, there was still some risk of infection.

#### IACLE RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMES

**Dr Lewis Williams** and **Nilesh Thite** reviewed the many resources available from IACLE to support contact lens educators. The New IACLE Contact Lens Course (New ICLC) had been fully revamped and updated. ICLC was not a recipe for how and what should be taught – educators could adapt it to suit their local needs, said Dr Williams. An additional module on myopia management would be added soon.

New for 2017 was Research Update, 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 the IACLE Fellowship Exam. And 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 pattern for students' practical assessment in contact lenses. Issues identified from the pilot 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. Standard evaluation case sheets could be developed to use across the world and IACLE Fellows used as external examiners, said Dr Shinde.

#### DAILY DISPOSABLE SIHY

**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.

For daily wear, looking at profiling across a range of powers, some low Dk hydrogels failed to meet the minimum value to avoid corneal hypoxia at all points under the lens. Clinical consequences of corneal hypoxia that remained a concern with hydrogels were limbal hyperaemia, increased myopic progression and neovascularisation.

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.

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS WITH PRESBYOPIA

Day two opened with a session on presbyopic lens fitting and teaching. **Professor Janice Jurkus** outlined the potential market for presbyopic correction in India, where around 35m people were aged 50 or over and the average age of a company CEO was 56 years.

Key questions to ask presbyopes were: how much time do you spend doing near, intermediate and distance tasks, and at what distance do you need to see best? Determine whether contact lenses would be for everyday or for occasional wear and identify environmental considerations, then set expectations by talking about 'good functional vision' and the possibility that supplementary glasses might be necessary. With presbyopes, psychology was as important as the contact lens fitting. 'Promise less and deliver more,' she advised.

**Professor Monica Chaudhry** looked at how to teach presbyopic contact lens fitting. She set a pre-task exercise prior to



**Dr Ithar Beshwar** described how contact lenses are taught at An-Najah National University in Palestine

her lectures, asking students to conduct a search of the products available on the market and question their parents about their experiences of near vision.

Choosing the optimum presbyopic lens option was best taught using case studies, each group presenting a case analysis and the rest of the class commenting critically. Communication skills could be taught using role-plays.

#### ESTABLISHING CONTACT LENS GROWTH IN SCHOOLS

The final session was devoted to group exercises to identify the challenges of teaching contact lenses and share ideas for increasing uptake of lens wear worldwide.

**Professor Janice Jurkus** and **Dr Ithar Beshwar** described how contact lenses were taught in their respective institutions, in the US and Palestine. The discussion generated a long list of suggestions for encouraging contact lens growth, with benefits for educators too.

Conducting clinical research would drive patients into their clinics. Holding a contact lens awareness day or week would raise the profile of their departments within their schools. And co-operation between institutions and countries – whether for research projects or postgraduate study – would help make students much more proactive in contact lenses.

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. Industry had a clear role to play in supporting educators in research, and also in their clinics and labs. →



**Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan:** nine in 10 contact lens wearers did not comply fully with all wear and care steps



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## TURNING CHALLENGE INTO OPPORTUNITY

Each of the industry representatives contributed a sponsor session to the congress. Alcon's **Dr Dwight Akerman** said the biggest challenge in contact lenses – 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, more consumer outreach campaigns and more educational support. But the 'leaky bucket' of contact lens dropout meant that the number of lens wearers had stayed the same in recent years.

The first step was to teach students and practitioners to proactively recommend contact lenses and improve their communication with patients. Both groups were too focused on the patient's chief complaint and needed to ask simple questions, such as: are there times when you would like to see clearly without your glasses? There were multiple reasons for dropout but many patients were still wearing old-technology products and suffering from dryness and discomfort.

For CooperVision, **Dr Gary Orsborn** reported that its latest product was MiSight 1 day that reduced myopic progression in children by 59% and axial length change by 52% over a three-year



**IACLE president Dr Shehzad Naroo called for proactive recommendation and addressing dropout**

period compared to a control group. The company also recently acquired the Procornea orthokeratology technology.

**Jack Chan**, representing Johnson & Johnson Vision, said his company's product focus was on addressing the specific needs of contact lens wearers. There were four

segments of predominant needs based on lifestyle and physiology: eyes with sensitivities, challenging environments, maximised wear and eye enhancement. The company's portfolio of Eye-Inspired Designs was tailored to meet these different needs. Be more personalised, be more profitable and be more efficient, he said.

## WCO focuses on eye health

As an official supporter, IACLE enjoyed a high profile at the 2nd World Congress of Optometry held in Hyderabad (September 11-13) following the IACLE Congress.

WCO was co-hosted by the World Council of Optometry, Asia Pacific Council of Optometry and India Vision Institute, and attracted 1,350 delegates to a three-day programme of lectures, workshops and poster sessions on the theme 'Accessible, quality vision and eye health'. Alcon, CooperVision and Johnson & Johnson Vision were gold sponsors of the WCO event.

The overall emphasis for WCO was on public health, particularly children's vision, myopia and diabetes. Incoming WCO president **Dr Scott Mundle** also announced a major step forward for the Indian

profession with the signing of a resolution on the regulation of optometry in India.

IACLE delivered as many as 50 presentations at WCO, as well as reviewing abstracts and acting 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 crisis' of myopia. International speakers – including IACLE vice-president **Dr Luigina Sorbara** (pictured below right) – lined up to discuss the global increase in myopia prevalence and its economic impact, control the consequences for eye health, mechanisms of myopia control and the optical, pharmacological and environmental interventions available.

During WCO, the LV Prasad Eye Institute honoured the late Professor Brien Holden, founder and past president of IACLE, with the inauguration of the Brien Holden Institute of Optometry and Vision Sciences. Professor Gullapalli N Rao, founder and chair of LVPEI described Professor Holden as a visionary leader and one of the most influential optometrists of his generation. 'We will continue to do the good work and take his legacy forward,' said Professor Rao.



## SHARING EXPERIENCES

Closing the congress, **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, 'getting lenses on eyes' and addressing dropout were all essential if more people were to wear contact lenses and – importantly – keep wearing them.

The IACLE Congress provided an invaluable opportunity for educators from around the world to get together and share their experiences.

IACLE also acknowledged the achievements of its members with the presentation of the IACLE Award for Lifetime Achievement in Contact Lens Education to former president, Professor Deborah Sweeney, and the 2017 IACLE Asia-Pacific Contact Lens Educator of the Year Award to Professor Koon-Ja Lee from Eulji University, Korea. LVPEI also instituted the Professor Deborah Sweeney Chair in Contact Lenses during the congress. ●

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