CORE / COVID-19 and Contact Lens Wear – Challenging Media Questions

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The following are for use by CLAE paper authors to guide responses to potential media questions (consumer responses noted; can be adapted for clinical needs). Note this document focuses only on the most controversial, awkward, outlandish and charged topics, and is not intended to be comprehensive.

In all cases, CORE should reinforce the key five facts, addressing a question then bridging to those points.

Switching CLs & LCPs / Behavior Changes

1. **Are daily disposable lenses the best type of contact lens to be wearing now? Should I switch? Is there a specific brand of lens or lens care solution you recommend or caution against?**

    - Our newly paper showed there was currently no scientific evidence that soft contact lens material type has any bearing on risk for infection.
    - Daily disposable, two week and monthly lenses can continue to be worn; it's important to thoroughly wash and dry hands, maintain good wear-and-care practices…
    - If you are considering a change, contact your eye care practitioner; only she or he can determine which lens is best for you after a thorough evaluation based on your eyes, your lifestyle and a range of other factors.

2. **Why is the CDC recommending hydrogen peroxide solution? Is that better? Should everyone switch from their current MPS product?**

    - We are not aware of <u>any</u> solutions that have been tested for disinfection against COVID-19.
    - People should speak with their eye care practitioner about the best lens care solution for their specific needs.
    - No matter what product is selected, follow the manufacturer's instructions. That's the best chance of killing any microorganism.

3. **What do contact lens wearers need to do differently during the pandemic?**

    - It's easy to think that COVID-19 has changed how we should treat wearing contact lenses, but that's not the case.
    - Instead, the heighted awareness has made us aware of the needs to take really good care of yourself and your lenses – e.g., hand washing, case hygiene, avoid touching face, cleaning specs.
    - It has also highlighted the importance of having a relationship with your eye care practitioner; only he or she can determine which contact lens and lens care product is best for you after a thorough evaluation based on your eyes, your lifestyle and a range of other factors.

4. **You state that people can resume wearing lenses when fully healthy? What is "fully healthy?"**

    - That should be a decision made with the person's eye care practitioner and physician.

5. **You state that people can wear lenses when healthy, but transmission can occur when someone is asymptomatic. How does this align? Shouldn't everyone stop wearing CLs now?**

    - It's important not to confuse the issues here
    - CORE TO SUMMARIZE… KEEP IT SIMPLE

Other Lens Types

1. **Are there any special precautions for people who wear hard contact lenses – e.g., RGP and sclerals?**

    - It's important to thoroughly wash and dry hands, maintain good wear-and-care practices, and follow manufacturer instructions and the advice of your eye care practitioner.

AAOphth and Other Misinformation Sources

1. **Why are some doctor recommending that patients switch from contact lenses to glasses? Are they wrong?**

    - I can't speak for them, nor how familiar they are with the latest findings on the matter
    - What I can speak to is the science – we need to look at fact over fear
    - As supported by our new findings as well as new CDC guidance, these is currently no scientific evidence that…

2. **Are ophthalmologists lying about the need to stop wearing contacts? Why would AAOphth provide incorrect guidance? Does it call into question their other guidance?**
    - I can't speak for them nor their intentions
    - What I can speak to is the science – we need to look at fact over fear
    - As supported by our new findings as well as new CDC guidance, these is currently no scientific evidence that…

3. **Do ophthalmologists recommending a switch have ulterior motives? Could they be trying to sway patients toward refractive procedures?**

    - I can't speak to their intentions
    - What I can speak to is the science – we need to look at fact over fear
    - As supported by our new findings as well as new CDC guidance, these is currently no scientific evidence that…

4. **Is there any validity to AAOphth's guidance?**

    - As you know, they have provided their opinion on a range of issues
    - What I can speak to is contact lens wear…

5. **Have you spoked with AAOphth? Will they change their recommendations?**

    - We have made AAOphth aware of our newly published paper as well as new CDC guidance
    - We hope they'll act with sound science in mind, but I can't speak to their plans

Other

1. **Do contact lenses have advantages or disadvantages for front line healthcare professionals when worn with PPE / face shields?**

    - Our paper did not look at this aspect of contact lens wear.
    - We have seen people wearing both under PPE, and that's a matter of personal preference.
    - In some instances, we have seen anecdotal reports of some healthcare professionals preferring contact lenses because they do not fog under PPE nor interfere with face protection.
    - No matter what someone wears, it's essential that they practice good hygiene…

2. **Could your guidance on contact lens wear change with additional research?**

    - This is a fast-moving situation, yet the science is moving incredibly quick as well—as shown by the speed with which we created this new paper
    - It's important for all medical professionals to keep pace with advances… one reason we are putting considerable effort into sharing our findings

3. **Hydroxychloroquine has been in the news, with many people rushing to self-medicate, even preventatively. Is there any reason that contact lens wearers should not take this drug?**

    - CORE TO CONFIRM
    - We have no current research on any contraindications between hydroxychloroquine and contact lens wear
    - At the same time, this is a discussion that must be had with your physician

4. **Do you believe that [official] is handling the pandemic well?**

    - I can speak to the science of contact lens wear—and should stick to my area of expertise!
    - Likewise, we hope that people who are not healthcare professionals look to medicine and science for the facts

<u>Additional Qs Used During Round One Media Training</u>

1. A UK report is saying contact lenses are more effective at preventing COVID-19 than spectacles. Is this accurate?

2. Isn't CORE sponsored by contact lens manufacturers? Is your reporting biased?

3. Don't ophthalmologists have profits to gain by recommending LASIK over contact lenses?

4. If you say there is no evidence that any contact lens solution can disinfect for COVID-19, doesn't that make the case for not wearing contacts at all?

5. If you aren't aligned on the CDC's guidance on H2O2, why should we believe the rest of the CDC's guidance on contact lens wear? Is the CDC only half right?

6. Is Canada handling the pandemic better than the U.S.?