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Prevalence, habits and outcomes of wearing contact lenses among medical students at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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Statement of the Problem: Contact lenses (CLs) have been prescribed since more than a century for correction of refractive errors, cosmetic purposes and for therapeutic modality. However, complications can occur if users fail to take necessary hygienic precautions.

Objectives: To determine prevalence, cause of use, habits, awareness about CL hygiene and its complications among medical students at King Abdulaziz University (KAU).

Method: A cross-sectional study was done and a multi-stage stratified random sampling was used to select 538 medical students. They completed a self-administered, validated, and confidential questionnaire contained questions about CL use, hygienic practices, and their complications. Both descriptive and analytic statistics were done.

Results: The prevalence of CL use among participants was 40.3% (13.3% and 56.2% among males and females, respectively). Second year students had the highest prevalence of CL usage. Cosmetic purpose was the commonest reason of use. It was found that 30.4% of students renew their lenses annually and only 16.6% of students clean their CL daily. A high prevalence of both conjunctivitis (18.9%) and acute red eye (19.8%) were documented and other complications occur but less frequently.

Conclusion & Significance: A high prevalence (40.3%) of CL use was prevailed among medical students. Female had significantly much higher prevalence of wearing contact lenses compared to males. The commonest cause of wearing CL was for cosmetic purpose. The second year medical students were the most interested group in CL wear. The predominance used types of CL are daily and monthly lenses. The respondents reported good knowledge but weak regarding CL related hygiene (cleaning hands prior application and changing case solution overnight). Acute red eye was the common complication (19.4%).

Recommendations: Providing sound, detailed educational messages for all CL consumers by ophthalmologist and at the dispensing shops about CL hygienic practices is required. Early treatment of complications is recommended.

Biography

Hadeel Seraj is currently a Medical student at King Abdulaziz University (KAU), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She has obtained an Academic Excellence Certificate from the dean of the Faculty of Medicine at KAU for two years. She was honored with the Superior Certificate from the deanship of student affairs at KAU. She is a Class Scientific Committee Leader and an organizer of many medical events. She is a volunteer in mobile clinic project in historical Jeddah and a volunteer with Red Crescent Authority in Almasjed Alharam, Makkah. She has participated in the Saudi Diabetic Awareness Campaign and is a volunteer in ER triage Assistance shifts and Patients' Visits project at KAU Hospital. She is a participant of Health Promotion Unit of The Fifth Youth in Makkah region, Saudi Arabia.

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