

Won't there be a dry eye in the house?

Innovative technology using light pulses to reactivate the meibomian glands

Let's be honest: How many of your customers complain about dry eyes? Especially when you actively address the topic during an eye- or contact lens checkup?

The number is likely to be considerable, and it is growing inexorably and rapidly in the age of digitization. Countless international studies have already dealt with the effects of dry eye and even declared it to be a modern widespread disease. The importance of functional meibomian glands is obvious.

This is about more than just wearing comfort of contact lenses

You know it: Your customers complain about the lack of comfort of their contact lenses (especially in winter). In particular, when the day is already a few hours behind it. As a responsible and competent optician / optometrist, you will do a thorough analysis of the situation, check the contact lenses fit and determine that there is a dry eye problem. A wide variety of treatment options is available; however, one is usually not enough. More often, it has to be a whole package. Making this clear to the CL-wearer and motivating them to cooperate is not always crowned with success and one or the other CL-wearer becomes a drop out. Unfortunately! But the problem of dry eyes goes much further than that: More and more people are suffering and report massive restrictions in their quality of life. Anyone who carefully reads the comments on the Facebook group »Sicca Syndrome« knows what I'm talking about. We as humans tend to seek simple, fast and effective solutions, whether these always suit the eyecare specialist or not. The eyecare specialist has an advantage if they already know which drawer to pull, meaning they have to know which solution provides success in an efficient manner. Obviously, a high level of solution competence brings recognition and high reputation. Not to mention the impact it has on the referral rate.

Using the right resources and why the meibomian glands are the key to success

Regardless of which solution one recommends for alleviating the symptoms of dry eye, there is no way around taking care about the meibomian glands. If they do not work properly, the use of gels, sprays, capsules, drops etc. only becomes even more complex, and more expensive! It makes sense to take the meibomian glands seriously. Be it in analyzing them or in caring about them.

The analysis alone requires a certain amount of know-how as well as the appropriate equipment. Without a Meibography, it becomes difficult, because it shows whether these valuable glands are functional. Now what should be done if this is not the case?

The French company E-Swin has developed a device: tearstim[®]. It is called the problem solver as the aim of the application is to reactivate the meibomian glands. This is made possible through the innovative pulsed light technology (IRPL[®] Intense Regulated Pulsed Light). Tearstim[®] transmits light impulses to the skin around the eye, in the area in which the parasympathetic nerve runs.

The pulse light releases neurotransmitters that interact with the meibomian glands and thus stimulate the functionality of the gland. The quality of the glandular secretion can also be positively influenced, which in turn leads to the stabilization of the lipid layer in the tear film.

Thoroughly tested by a real professional

Ultimately, only practice can judge whether a device brings the desired success when used on the customer. Robert Fetzner, coach & trainer, master optician, low vision specialist, contact lens specialist from Moosburg (Germany), is certainly one of the busiest specialists when it comes to dry eyes. In his

professional career, he has already tested many products and commented accordingly in the specialist press. He is also available to the industry when it comes to the development of new products. Fetzer has extensively tested tearstim® in-store. Unfortunately, due to corona, the test turned out a little less intensive than desired, but the results can non the less be shown. Here is the interview with him:

Robert Fetzer, why have you been dealing with the problem of dry eyes for several years?

Yes, it's been 16 years in which I have dealt more and more intensively with the rapidly growing problem. I want satisfied customers and healthy eyes. Nowadays this is only possible if you deal with these symptoms.

How do your customers react and what effects does your advice / specialization have on your business?

Customers are often surprised that I work like this as an optician. Every customer is approached and analyzed for possible problems relating to dry eyes during the eye and contact lens check. This specialization leads to a steadily growing and satisfied customer base. I call this specialization and the corresponding services "eye service", which sounds understandable to the customer.

Where do you focus on dry eye management? How do you analyze / classify dry eye?

Clearly in the elimination and solution of the unsightly, often stressful situation. The analysis is carried out using a Keratograph (meibography) including all dry eye modules, including the JENVIS-DRY-EYE REPORT from Prof. Sickenberger, as well as the i.Profiler Plus as a preliminary measurement, as well as the slit lamp with a photo and video unit.

When do you choose dry eye therapy?

There are two customer groups. Some who have symptoms such as watery eyes, burning, itching, feeling like a grain of sand or have to blink constantly. The others, who do not report any major signs of dry eyes, but if you ask them specifically about possible symptoms, they confirm them immediately. Also, for a reliable refraction result and a healthy and successful contact lens fitting, a good tear environment is imperative for me.

When does tearstim come into the equation for you? What are your decision criteria for using this technology?

Fundamentally, the reduction in the functionality of the meibomian glands is the relevant factor for me. To detect this, a so-called Meibography needs to be performed. The gland outlets must be free. This is a basic requirement! When the glands are in the initial stages of degeneration, I do not apply tearstim, unless the meibomian gland outlets close within a few hours after cleaning the eyelid margin.

How do you go about communicating with the customer? How do you convince them to have an "eye service"?

First of all, the customer must know what it is all about. I visualize and explain all of this on two large monitors using a small power point presentation. After that, the customer knows why I am suggesting the procedure.

How does a tearstim application work?

On the day on which the application is carried out, warming masks are used first. This is followed by cleansing the eyelids. The application itself only takes a few minutes and can easily be done. The customer's eyes are covered with protective eye shells that are impermeable to the transmitted light impulses. On the application area, the lower eyelid, the tearstim® Aloe vera gel is applied. A series of 8-10 light pulses is carried out around the eye. These are gentle and non-invasive. Then the other eye follows. The application can often lead to an increase in eye wellbeing after just a few hours. The effect

of the application initially lasts for a few days and accumulates with each subsequent application. The whole process involves 3–4 applications in order to achieve a long-lasting effect. According to the manufacturer, an annual session is recommended to refresh and maintain the achieved effects.

How are the reactions of the customers regarding the improvement of their situation?

Most of the customers describe a wonderful feeling in the eyes on the following days. They no longer felt the need to use drops or a spray. 90% said that the symptoms of dry eyes had improved. Better vision, no more burning sensation, less tearing, less need to rub the eyes and no more sandy feeling were reported as well.

How do you objectively check the success of the application?

All test customers were already undergoing treatment in my store, so I knew their history. Before each treatment with tearstim, and two weeks after, a meibography was performed. This enabled us to check the number of active glands. The situation of the tear film, the degree of redness and keratitis were also assessed.

What about the costs for the customer?

Anyone who thinks economically correct, should at least charge € 120,- per treatment session. This is quite a price to charge as an optician. Unfortunately, we as opticians/ optometrists have not yet managed to get our services valued at a fair price.

In summary, how do you see and assess the use and success of tearstim?

Even if the test could not be fully completed due to Corona, it convinced me to purchase the device for my company. We are convinced that we have customers for such an application, and it fits into our overall concept for managing dry eyes.

Marcel Zischler



1: Robert FETZER, Optician DE

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