

Finding Out What Your Patients Want

About one-quarter of practice's patients want to sleep in contact lenses

Virgil Mewborn, O.D., a NVI-affiliated O.D. in New Bern, NC, had been telling his patients for years not to sleep in their contact lenses. When NIGHT & DAY® first gained approval from the FDA for up to 30 nights of continuous wear, he wasn't sure the lens would find a place in his practice.

But it has. "I was surprised to see how well patients could wear the lenses problem-free for 30 nights," he said. "I realized that if they wanted to sleep with their lenses, a silicone hydrogel lens was the way to go. And NIGHT & DAY, with its high oxygen transmissibility, would be the best option."

He's found that about one-quarter of his contact lens patients say they would like to sleep in a lens, if there is one he would recom-

mend. "The convenience of continuous wear is a factor for them. I suggest they pick a day of the month—like the 1st—so they can make a habit of

changing their lenses," he said. ■



GUEST COLUMN FROM ESSILOR

Computer Lenses & Contacts: Keep the 60-Somethings in Contact Lenses

By Rodney Tahran, O.D., F.A.A.O.



Dr. Tahran

It's no surprise that there are a large number of people who don't like wearing glasses. Increasingly the adventuresome among them are opting for corrective laser surgery (about 5 million today projected to grow to 25 million or more by 2015). Others choose the more conservative contact lens option. Both groups prefer plano sunwear and the freedom that comes from not wearing corrective eyeglasses for distance to near.

Presbyopia has been called a silent wake-up call, one of the first "in your face" signs of getting older. Those comfortable in glasses mostly transition smoothly to progressive lenses, which give them the distance, intermediate and near vision required in today's computerized office and leisure environments. But for those who don't think of themselves as eyeglass wearers, the transition can be more painful as evidenced from the market data.

There is a surge in Rx and OTC readers (an estimated 6 million and 34 million pairs, respectively, with a potential retail market value exceeding \$6 billion at Rx level) being sold to the 40-year-old to 60-year-old market. There is a corresponding drop in contact lenses sales—from 22 percent of all wearers at age 40 to just six percent by age 60. This trend reflects in part the eventual surrender to full-time eyewear as the eyes mature and the need for intermediate viewing increases in importance.

That needn't be the case. To reverse the trend, it becomes particularly important for optometrists in a retail setting to understand some of the new lens options that can keep satisfied contact lens users in contacts longer and develop a loyal following among emmetropic presbyopes.

Sold and marketed as "computer lenses," a near-variable focus overcorrection may offer a contact lens wearer a better option to monovision, fixed-focus readers or full-time eyeglasses. Unlike prescribing such lenses for computer use, it is critical to ensure the lens performs first as a good reader, having the necessary reading power in the lower portion of the lens. The power digression as the wearer looks up through the lens serves as a bonus, allowing the wearer to enjoy comfortable viewing for most intermediate viewing activities to six feet or more.

This is a different approach for a different patient need. Traditionally, a near-point tester such as PRIO® is used to determine a "computer add" at pupil center when prescribing a computer lens. In this case, the computer lens will serve as a near-intermediate reader, tweaked for cylinder as warranted.

For the satisfied presbyopic contact lens wearer expressing a desire to stay in contacts, the eyewear options might look like this:

- ◆ Single vision back-up pair for distance, in the current Rx
- ◆ Single vision back-up pair for reading without contacts, in the current Rx
- ◆ Computer lens reading power overcorrection, for "on-off" wear while wearing contacts and viewing at near and intermediate distances.

Getting it right ensures the patient will enjoy these lenses as a complement to their contacts and can keep them "eyeglass-free" for many years beyond 60. ■

Dr. Patel Joins Panel

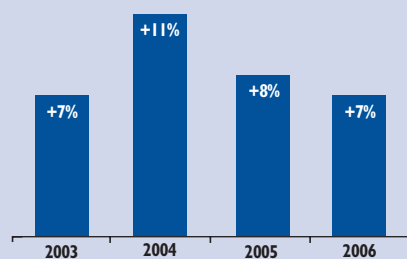
Priti Patel, O.D., joined Wal-Mart as director of professional relations. She replaces **Mark Travis, O.D.**, on the COR panel. Dr. Travis is now divisional manager, professional relations in Wal-Mart's optical division. Dr. Patel is a 2004 graduate of NOVA Southeastern College of Optometry. After her graduation, she completed a residency in primary care and ocular disease at Pennsylvania College of Optometry. ■



Dr. Patel

By the Numbers

U.S. Soft Lens Manufacturer Sales Growth (% change vs. prior year)



Source: Industry estimates