

UVR labelling of spectacles and contact lenses called for

18 September 2009

Comprehensive protection of the eyes against ultra violet radiation (UVR) requires not only a block in front of the cornea but also the sides of the eye, in particular the adjacent limbal and conjunctival stem cells of the eye. Thus, according to a new position paper commissioned and published by the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO), UVR-blocking contact lenses that extend over the limbus and palisades of Vogt provide more complete protection. Similarly, sunglasses of a tight fitting wrap-around design, as opposed to small flat lenses mounted off the eye, offer the best protection, providing that they adhere to the highest standard of inherent UVR-blocker in their lens material.

The position paper, by Doctors Bergmanson, Walsh and Söderberg, also recommends the development of a system of labelling of the relative protection factor contained in each type of optical appliance, so that it can be easily understood by the general public and healthcare providers. Such a labelling system would have to be scientifically based.

The position paper offers a succinct and contemporary overview of the scientific literature on the danger of UVR to the human eye and is attached to this press release. It is also available on ECOO's website: www.ecoo.info

Notes for editors:

The European Council of Optometry and Optics is the confederation of national organisations representing optometrists, opticians and optical retail companies in 30 countries of Europe. It aims to promote eye health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe.

Ocular Ultraviolet Radiation is a study carried out by Dr Jan Bergmanson of the Texas Eye Research and Technology Center of the University of Houston College of Optometry, Dr James Walsh of the School of Physics of the Dublin Institute of Technology and Dr Per Söderberg of the Department of Neuroscience of Uppsala University.

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