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Poster Abstracts

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Dry eye through the patient lens: a multi-country analysis of impact and unmet needs

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Purpose: This study sought to characterize the burden, lived experience, and unmet needs of individuals reporting symptoms of dry eye (DE) across five international populations, and to identify opportunities for earlier, more meaningful engagement between patients and eyecare professionals (ECPs).

Method: A two-phase, online study was conducted in early 2025 among adults aged ≥ 18 years in the UK, France, Germany, Poland, and Saudi Arabia. Phase I (n=2,580) quantified DE prevalence and awareness in the general population; Phase II (n=2,572) profiled sufferers regarding symptomology, self-care, professional care, and treatment satisfaction. Data were weighted by age, gender, and region to represent each national population.

Results: Approximately one in four adults reported regular DE symptoms, and nearly half of sufferers experienced them daily. Dryness and ocular fatigue were most commonly reported and rated as moderately to severely bothersome. Many respondents attributed DE to digital device use, environmental conditions, or simply aging. Despite frequent symptoms, with up to a third of sufferers having experienced symptoms for over 5 years, fewer than half had consulted a healthcare professional. Around a third of sufferers reported that symptoms had become more bothersome in the past year. Common frustrations included the transient relief from their habitual eye drops, frequent dosing, and uncertainty about long-term management. Emotionally, sufferers expressed frustration, and a sense of resignation, with only about one-third strongly agreeing their ECP provided the best available guidance.

Conclusions: DE substantially affects both daily functioning and emotional wellbeing, yet remains under-recognized and undertreated. ECPs are urged to engage earlier and more proactively to screen for DE. Strengthening communication and follow-up can transform DE management from episodic symptom relief to sustained care for each particular patient's type of DE.

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