



DRY EYE AWARENESS MONTH

PRESS RELEASE
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VISION COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES JULY AS *DRY EYE AWARENESS MONTH* WITH RELEASE OF MAJOR STUDY OF THE DISEASE TO BE FEATURED IN A CONGRESSIOINAL BRIEFING

(Washington, D.C.) Today, the vision community and its coalition partners announced enhanced education and communications in 2017 around recognition of July as *Dry Eye Awareness Month*. This is due to the July publication in *The Ocular Surface* journal of the Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society's (TFOS) Dry Eye Workshop II (TFOS DEWS II™) Report. In this first re-examination of the topic since the initial report issued in 2007, TFOS DEWS II™ will update the definition, classification, and diagnosis of dry eye; critically evaluate the epidemiology, pathophysiology, mechanism, and impact of the disease; address its management and therapy; and develop recommendations for the design of clinical trials to assess pharmaceutical interventions.

TFOS DEWS II™ highlights will be presented at a July 12 Congressional Briefing entitled *Dry Eye: An Updated Definition, A Greater Impact on Vision Health*—co-hosted by TFOS and the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR)—to be held from 12 Noon – 1:15 pm in Rayburn 2168 (Gold Room). The Briefing will be bookended by a “Test Your Tears” Dry Eye Screening and Dry Eye Researcher Poster Presentation from 11:30 am – 2 pm. The vision community is making Congressional education about dry eye a priority since it impacts healthcare policy, as it is one of the most frequent causes of patient visits to eye care providers, and since federal research funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including its National Eye Institute (NEI), is being used to study dry eye causes and develop treatments.

Dry eye, a global problem affecting more than 30 million people in the United States alone, occurs when the eye does not produce tears properly or when the tears are not of the correct consistency and evaporate too quickly. For some people, it feels like a speck of sand in the eye, or stinging or burning that does not go away. For others, dry eye can become a painful chronic and progressive condition that leads to blurred vision or even vision loss if it goes untreated due to inflammation that can cause ulcers or scars on the cornea, the clear surface of the eye. Moderate-to-severe dry eye is associated with significant pain, role limitations, low vitality, poor general health, and often depression.

Although researchers have long known about age, sex, and gender as factors, they are now discovering ethnic and racial differences and that dry eye impacts younger patients. It can have many causes, including environmental exposure; side-effects from medications; eye surgery (such as laser correction surgery); lid disorders; immune system diseases such as Sjögren's syndrome, lupus, or rheumatoid arthritis; contact lens wear; cosmetic use; aesthetic procedures; and an increasingly common cause—staring at computer or video screens for too long without blinking.

The vision community and its coalition partners are pleased to support the July 2017 *Dry Eye Awareness Month* educational activities, including:

Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR)
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Optometry
American Optometric Association
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
HealthyWomen
Prevent Blindness
Research to Prevent Blindness
Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation
Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society (TFOS)
University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry
Women's Eye Health
Women in Ophthalmology

TFOS thanks the following industry partners who supported TFOS DEWS II™ with unrestricted donations, including: Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation and Alcon, a division of Novartis, Shire, Allergan, Bausch+Lomb, Akorn, CooperVision, Dompé, Horus Pharma, Lubris Biopharma, Oculève, TearLab, Laboratoires Théa, SIFI, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Quint Health, Scope Ophthalmics, Sun Pharma, Carl Zeiss Meditec, Inc. ZEISS Group, and Senju.

About TFOS

Founded in 2000, the Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society is a world leader in eye health education headquartered in Boston. A 501(c)3 non-profit foundation, TFOS is dedicated to advancing the research, literacy, and educational aspects of the scientific field of the eye's surface. More information about the TFOS DEWS II™ Report is available at www.tearfilm.org

About AEVR

Founded in 1993, the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation dedicated to education about the importance of federal funding for eye and vision research. In 2009, Congress passed H. Res. 366 and S. Res. 209 designating 2010-2020 as the "Decade of Vision" and acknowledging AEVR's *Decade of Vision 2010-2020 Initiative*. More information on the July 12 Congressional Briefing/Screening is available at www.eyeresearch.org