Presbyopia prescribing habits of eye care practitioners and patient satisfaction in Italy: which role for contact lenses?
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Background

Presbyopia is the physiological age-related loss in near visual function and it is estimated to affect about 1.3 billion people worldwide in 2011. Although many options in contact lens and surgery have been proposed to restore near visual function, reading spectacles are still the most common correction for presbyopia. In order to judge the success of any correction option both objective visual function measures and patient reported outcomes should be assessed. The Near Activity Visual Questionnaire (NAVQ), is designed specifically to assess the benefits of presbyopia correction and it was introduced and standardised for English speakers by Buckhurst et al (2007) and it was developed further by Buckhurst et al (2012). This is a 10-Item questionnaire, plus an item rating overall satisfaction with near vision. It has been used to compare outcomes after refractive surgery or multifocal contact lenses. An Italian version of NAVQ was arranged according to recommendations and guidelines for a comprehensive multistep methodological process for translating, adapting and validating psychometric instruments in health care research (Zeri et al, 2017).

Purpose

To investigate Italian eye-care practitioners’ prescribing habits and patient satisfaction about presbyopia correction.

Methods

270 subjects (aged over 42) completed the NAVQ. Patients’ age, gender, refraction, and type of optical correction worn, were recorded, including information on the prescriber and the time of the assessment.

Results

251 completed surveys were collected (137 females), aged 42-81 years (mean 56).

46% of the subjects wore single-vision glasses (SV), 37% progressive-addition spectacle lenses (PAL), 5% multifocal contact lenses (CL), and 12% no correction.

The majority of emmetropes (86%) wore SV, while people who needed a distance correction wore PAL (50%), SV (43%) or multifocal CL (7%).

35% of subjects had worn the same correction for more than two years, 32% for 1 to 2 years and 33% less than one year.

Mean NAVQ score was 34 (SD 16), there was no correlation with age and no statistical difference among several types or times of the prescription.

Conclusions

If the optic correction is adequate, the deterioration of the quality of vision in presbyopia and the degree of patients’ dissatisfaction do not depend on the amount of presbyopia, but on the presbyopia onset. Multifocal contact lenses are effective in making people independent in daily near activities, as much as single vision or progressive glasses. However, the use of contact lenses for presbyopia is not widely spread in Italy due to mainly not all eye-care professionals are equally likely to prescribe them.

References