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Innovation Spotlight **Two new products aim to soothe dry eyes**

by Vanessa Caceres EyeWorld Contributing Editor

Goggles aim to retain and create moisture around the eyes

Two new products may help your dry-eye patients alleviate their most irritating symptoms. However, patients will want to consider carefully when to use them.

Panoptx glasses (Panoptx, Pleasanton, Calif.) have an insert that creates a sealed moisture chamber around the eyes and aims to diminish dry-eye symptoms. They are available as a prescription, non-prescription, and sunglasses. Tranquileyes (Eye Eco, Murrieta, Calif.) are a soft, flexible goggle that also creates a moist environment around the eye and prevent evaporation of natural tears. The goggles are meant for wear while sleeping, relaxing, or in an environment where dry-eye symptoms are at their worst.

Robert Lasky, M.D., founder, Center for Ocular Tear Film Disorders, New York, studied both of these products with a group of his dry-eye patients.

Panoptx

Dry-eye doctors and their patients have tried homemade inserts similar to the ones used in Panoptx glasses, said Dr. Lasky. "You have no air entry in the eye plus the heat from your body creates a little moisture," he said. This helps dry-eye symptoms diminish, he said. Although the Panoptx spectacles look more like goggles than your typical glasses might, Dr. Lasky said the look "isn't that bad," and that patients may choose to wear them while driving or using the computer. Dr. Lasky tried the glasses with 22 of his most severe dry-eye patients. "I'm always looking for ways to treat dry-eye patients, who've reached the endpoint of potential options," he said. These patients had the burning, redness, itching, and light sensitivity common in many dry-eye patients, and rated these symptoms as severe on a questionnaire. The patients wore the glasses at least four hours a day and then returned to his office a month later to recheck their symptoms. Overall, the average score on the questionnaire for their symptoms went from 5.9 (10 being the highest) to 3.2. "The symptoms weren't eliminated but they were nicely reduced," said

Dr. Laskany. All specific dry-eye symptoms were reduced to some extent, especially dryness and grittiness.

Twenty of the 22 patients continue to use the Panoptx lenses, and Dr. Laskany also uses them when driving. One patient did not like the way they looked and a second said they caused a little redness around the eyes.

"I continue to offer them, specifically to people who drive and fly a lot and stare at a computer all day," he said.

The product retails for \$150 to \$450, depending on prescription use, said Dr. Laskany.

The Panoptx lenses are a "great concept," but there's a question of whether contact lens users will warm to them, said John D. Sheppard, M.D., professor of ophthalmology, microbiology, and immunology, Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Va. Contact lens patients are commonly the ones that have dry eye but they're also the ones that often want to avoid glasses, he said.

The idea behind Panoptx is similar to that studied by Kazuo Tsubota, M.D., professor and chairman of ophthalmology, Keio University School of Medicine, Tokyo, who said that he thinks that Panoptx and tranquileyes are on the right track. In the May 1994 issue of *Cornea*, Dr. Tsubota published a study on the insertion of small, wet triangular sponges onto special side panels of modified glasses. The 10 patients studied noticed symptomatic, dry-eye relief with the inserts.

Tranquileyes

Dr. Laskany decided to test tranquileyes after researching lagophthalmos, where patients have trouble completely closing their eyes while sleeping. They wake up with redness and discharge. Although research has estimated the prevalence of lagophthalmos as 5%, Dr. Laskany thinks the prevalence is as high as 10% to 20%, based on work he did for a recent review paper on the topic.

Patients can wear the tranquileyes goggles at night as an alternative to the use of ointments, which protect the eye but can leave a residual amount in the morning.

Tranquileyes goggles come with a foam insert that patients soak in water and reinsert for added moisture. They are made for use while relaxing or sleeping.

Dr. Laskany had 20 patients wear the goggles while sleeping for one month. They did not have to wear the goggles for a set number of hours each night.

After using the goggles, patients rated their overall dry-eye symptoms at night as 5.5 (maximum score, 10) versus 9 before the study. They also rated their daytime symptoms as decreasing from a 9 to a 5. These patients' average score on the Ocular Surface Disease Index, which tracks dry-eye severity, was 33.85. After goggle use, it was 22.40.

Eighty-five percent of study participants continue to use the goggles and 75% have stopped using ointment at night, said Dr. Laskany.

The cost of the goggles ranges from \$24 to \$65, said Dr. Laskany.

Both the Panoptx and tranquileyes products could add a nice profit to practices with an optical shop, said Dr. Sheppard. However, they may take more time to penetrate the market because they're not as simple as writing prescriptions to glasses or medications, said Dr. Sheppard.

Dr. Sheppard has not used either of these products with patients but said he may consider them now.

Editors' note: *Dr. Laskany received the products he studied for free but he does not have a financial interest in the manufacturers. Dr. Sheppard has financial interests in Alcon (Fort Worth, Texas), Allergan (Irvine, Calif.), Bausch & Lomb (Rochester, N.Y.), Inspire (Durham, N.C.), Santen*

(Napa, Calif.), and Novartis (Basel, Switzerland). Dr. Tsubota has no related financial interests.

Contact Information

Latkany: 212-832-2020, relief@dryeyedoctor.com

Sheppard: 757-622-2200, docshep@hotmail.com

Tsubota: tsubota@sc.itc.keio.ac.jp



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