

## A round-up of the eye related hot topics that have been trending on social media over the last few weeks.

### #eyedoctor #banned #visamix-up #HomeOffice #hostileenvironment

An ophthalmologist was left stranded overseas when the Home Office refused him entry due to a visa mix-up. Dr Chan was working as a fellow at Moorfields Eye Hospital until August 2019, then was offered a consultant post in Reading. Based on confusing information on the Home Office website, Dr Chan believed he needed to make a new tier 2 visa application in order to take up his new post. In order to comply with the tier 2 application rules, he then arranged an overseas stay, only to have his application delayed by several weeks, and was then banned from entering the UK because he had breached the terms of his existing visa by being overseas for more than four weeks. He then had his job offer withdrawn. His ban came only days after doctors were added to the UK's occupation shortage list, whereby those professions that the UK has a shortage of would receive working visas as a priority [1,2].

The Doctors' Association UK, who took up Dr Chan's case, commented that this case demonstrates yet another instance whereby "the nonsensical Home Office hostile environment strategy... is at complete odds with attempts by the NHS to recruit international doctors" [3]. The decision has now been overturned by the Home Office, however, it is unclear whether Dr Chan will still be able to take up the consultant post that had been offered to him originally [3].

### #BobbyQuereshi

Prominent Consultant Ophthalmologist Bobby Quereshi has been erased from the UK medical register. His patients included June Brown from Eastenders and Lady Annabel Goldsmith [4]. A tribunal found that he had misled patients regarding their prospects for improvement following lens implantation for the progressive condition age-related macular degeneration (AMD) [4,5]. Quereshi was the Medical Director of the London Eye Hospital, where he offered treatment for AMD with innovative lenses (IOL-AMD, Eyemax Mono), which claimed to improve the central visual loss caused by AMD by utilising the healthier areas of the macula in order to reduce blurriness [5,6]. He was found to have used aggressive, pressure selling tactics, to have made false representations about the expected outcomes, and to have shown no remorse or empathy towards his patients during the proceedings [4,5]. For those interested in exactly why the tribunal recommended erasure, the full public record of the tribunal can be found here [7].

### #TaylorSwift #LASIK #JimmyFallon

Let's move on to more light-hearted news. The world found out that Taylor Swift underwent laser refractive surgery thanks to her mum and

Jimmy Fallon. Taylor Swift was on the Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon in early October 2019 to promote her new album 'Lover'. Jimmy Fallon then revealed to Taylor Swift, and the rest of the world in the process, that her mum had given them video footage of Swift having a postoperative medication induced melt-down over a banana. It's a rare occasion we see Swift without her trademark red lips, and to add insult to injury, wearing the very 'fashionable' protective postoperative goggles provided by her surgeon. To give her credit, she took it all in good humour. The video is on YouTube [8]; give it a watch if you need a mid-week pick-me-up!

### #OliviaColman #eyecolour #theCrown

Fans of Netflix's *The Crown* will know that Olivia Colman has been cast to take on the role of Queen Elizabeth II in Season 3. However, her brown eyes will not be taking on the blue hue of the Queen's. For starters, she was unable to even put the contacts on, due to her "very strong eyelids" [9]. Interesting though was the effect that the blue eye colour had on her acting. The director noted that on the occasions she could get the contact lenses on, it seemed that "she was acting behind a mask", and that "it was as if we had taken all of her acting ability and put it in a safe and locked it away" [10]. Even when they tried to change her eye colour with CGI in post-production, it seemed to diminish her performance [10]. The casting director agreed and said, "It's not about looks - it's about a quality" [10], and I am sure we will all agree when the season finally airs!

### #JamesO'Brien #acidattack #stemcellsurgery

James O'Brien is the first patient to have received corneal limbal stem cell transplantation on the NHS. He was injured in an acid attack when he was 18. Now 44, he underwent the procedure at Moorfields Eye Hospital, and has regained vision in his injured eye. Corneal limbal stem cells were removed from his fellow, uninjured eye one year prior, then grown in a laboratory in Italy. He then underwent surgical removal of the scar tissue on his injured eye, with replacement with the limbal stem cells grown from his healthy eye. After another year, the surgeons felt it was safe to proceed with a corneal transplant, after which his vision was restored [11]. The procedure was shown on BBC1's *Inside Out London*, and it is quite moving to watch the moment when he had his vision tested in his injured eye following the corneal transplant, when he realised he could see the Snellen chart, and see his wife clearly [12]. National Institute of Health & Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England have approved the treatment for all eligible patients.

### #genetherapy #eye #NHS

Draft NICE guidance has recommended that the gene therapy Luxturna be used to treat inherited retinal dystrophies with a mutation of the RPE65 gene. Inherited retinal dystrophies are a group of diseases whereby genetic mutations cause progressive deterioration of the retinal photoreceptors. Examples of such diseases are leber congenital amaurosis and retinitis pigmentosa. Novartis, the company which owns Luxturna, has agreed upon a discounted price of £613,410 [13,14].

### References

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(All links last accessed November 2019)

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