

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

### #oldEnglish #herbalremedies

Researchers from the University of Warwick, investigating natural remedies to treat bacterial infections, have discovered a potential new treatment. Taken from a 1000-year-old text called Bald's Leechbook, a medicine, called Bald's Eyesalve, used for stye infections, has shown promising anti-bacterial activity. The ingredients included garlic, bile salts, onion and wine. The unique mixture was effective against bacterial strains which were common in producing biofilms and infecting diabetic foot ulcers [1].

Given the ever-increasing demand for new antimicrobials to combat multi-drug resistant infections, natural remedies could be a sensible way to go. The origins of Sir Alexander Fleming's famous discovery come to mind.

### #novel #injections

New research presented in Dallas USA, has identified a new treatment, Avacincaptad Pegol, as being able to slow the progression of geographic atrophy. This is exciting news because currently, there are no treatments which are effective against this form of macular degeneration. Intravitreal injection showed a significant reduction in the progression of the atrophied lesions [2].

Although this treatment is new with hurdles to clear, it could help improve the lives of many people afflicted with dry macular degeneration.

### #eyes&ears #siblings

#### #inspiration@wanderlight.moments

A woman in the US has spoken of her rare genetic disorder, Usher Syndrome, which causes deafness and blindness. Her account is both sad and inspiring. She tells how she and her younger brother were born with hearing problems and fitted with hearing aids at a young age. In adolescence, she noticed worsening night vision. Diagnosed with the syndrome, genetic testing revealed her brother had it too. The condition, which causes retinitis pigmentosa, will eventually lead to complete blindness and possibly complete deafness.

She talks about what she will miss most and how she is adapting to her progressive vision loss, detailing where she has been, what she has seen since her diagnosis and what is on her bucket list – beautiful places that will stimulate her vision. She still works and is busy completing her master's degree. During the COVID-19 pandemic she has recognised the importance of the beauty of her home, family and friends [3], something that many of us never truly see or appreciate. To see her journey, go to her Instagram account @wanderlight.moments.

### #charity #retinopathyofprematurity #Forus #Neo

Recently, £75,000 was raised by three London hospital charities to provide the neonatal unit at St George's Hospital with The Neo [4]. This is a portable widefield (120°) retinal camera by Forus Health, designed for use in monitoring the retinas of premature babies at risk of developing retinopathy of prematurity. The advantages of the Neo over the RetCam are that it is cheaper, smaller, and much more portable. It also has inbuilt software, allowing automatic upload of images to servers even in low bandwidth areas [5]. In the new COVID-19 era, this device is likely to become increasingly relevant.

### #donotingest #methanol #covid-19

The Food and Drug Administration in the US has released safety warnings after children and adults were hospitalised, blinded and even died after drinking alcohol gel intended for external use only. It is feared that the methanol-containing sanitiser has been drunk by those wanting to protect themselves from the COVID-19 outbreak and as a cheap alcohol substitute [6].

### #steamedup #facemaskproblems

The BBC News website has produced a video with three tips to help stop spectacles steaming up whilst wearing a face mask, important as so many of us from all walks of life are required to wear masks. I have seen the frustration that condensation on the inside of glasses causes my colleagues. They find themselves continually having to clean and adjust their glasses, not always easy when your hands are occupied.

1. Wear your glasses so their bottom sits outside of your mask.
2. Attach rolled-up tissue paper to the inside of the top of your mask to absorb your breath.
3. Wash your glasses with soapy water, rinse and dry with tissue paper [7].

### #workingfromhome #covidsunexpectedproblems

An article in *The Times* has highlighted the problematic effect prolonged and regular screen time has on the eyes. Inevitably, computer, laptop, tablet, phone and TV usage has gone up significantly during lockdown and people's eyes are beginning to feel the toll. The College of Optometrists has revealed that a survey of 2000 people showed that one in five Britons feel their eyesight has deteriorated during lockdown, 32% of whom thought screen time was the main cause. Blurry vision, and red and / or painful eyes were the main complaints. Advice from the College includes:

- Using preservative-free eye drops.
- Eating more kale and broccoli.
- Looking away from the screen every 20 minutes, at something 20 feet away, for 20 seconds.
- Going for a walk [8].

### #donotdrivetotestyourvision #brewdog

You may remember the story of Dominic Cummings and his trip to Barnard Castle during lockdown. Whether you believe the PM's Chief Advisor's rather fanciful and outrageous claim that this was done in order to test his eyesight to see if he was safe to drive is up to you, but one man who clearly did not appreciate the tale was the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer. On a tour of BrewDog's London brewery, the MP made a point of pouring a pint of their 'Barnard Castle Eye Test' IPA [9].

BrewDog themselves have been doing a fantastic job throughout lockdown. They have been making hand sanitiser and providing this free of charge to the NHS and healthcare charities. So, on behalf of the NHS, I would like to say a big thank you to the company for all they have done and continue to do.

### References

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