

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

#Hello

A big hello to those reading. It's my absolute pleasure to take on the mantle of section editor of the What's Trending section from Stephanie. It's an honour to join the *Eye News* family and I look forward to keeping you all updated with the latest trends in ophthalmology. And on that note, let's get stuck in!

#TikTok #CastorOil #NotInTheEye

TikTok has been the home to many viral trends over the years, but this one comes with some questionable claims. Multiple videos have started circulating of individuals rubbing castor oil, a type of vegetable oil, into their eyes as a veritable cure-all of ophthalmic disease [1]. From treating dry eyes to floaters, from cataracts to glaucoma, the reported benefits have been remarkably wide-ranging. Unfortunately, while castor oil can be beneficial in some skin infections and is present in certain artificial tears, the evidence is not there to support its use for intraocular causes. Indeed, ophthalmologists in the USA are urging people not to delay seeking help for their eye problems related to self-treating with castor oil. Though if it could cure all that it claims, I'm not sure how many of us would still be in our jobs. I think I would leave to be a castor plant farmer...

#GiantEye #LasVegas

Let's imagine you've paid to get into one of the most prestigious public golf courses in the USA, the Wynn Golf Club in Las Vegas. You feel the baking Nevada sun on your face, the weight of the club in your hands, and as you look out over the green to tee off, you are faced with a giant eyeball [2]. It might feel like a surreal, Dali-inspired dream, but this is the reality faced by golfers on the course. And when I say giant, I really mean it. At 157m wide and 115m tall, it's quite the sight. The eye is courtesy of the MSG Sphere, a two-billion-dollar arena that has been under construction for the past five years, which will be opening to the public in the autumn of 2023. It's the world's largest spherical construction, being visible from anywhere in the Las Vegas valley, so it is not just golfers being caught up in its gaze. The image of the eye is projected onto its 1.2 million exterior LED screens to produce this bright, giant eyeball. It shines into the adjacent hotel rooms and flats, which may end up helping the local black-out blind market. Perhaps it will feel comforting to the residents to know that something is always looking over them.

#Wildfires #OcularIrritation

Anyone watching the news recently would have seen striking images of wildfires the world over. Canada have seen their worst season for wildfires on record already this summer, with the effects of its smoke travelling south through the USA, across major cities like Chicago and New York [3]. Closer to home, wildfires raged across Europe – in Greece this sparked the largest wildfire evacuation the country has ever seen [4]. Now questions are being asked of the long-term impact of this smoke on the eye. Ophthalmologists are reporting an increase in the numbers of patients with dryness and irritation, triggered by the particulate matter and toxic gases in the smoke [5]. The long-term implications of exposure are yet to be found, but research is ongoing, and we may see a trend for associated ophthalmic disease in wildfire regions.

#MissionImpossible #TomCruise #Stunt

Tom Cruise is a household name in the movie industry, well known for performing his own stunts. With the release of the latest

Mission Impossible instalment this summer, Tom continues to push the boundaries of action pieces. While his most notable claims are more death defying, such as riding a motorcycle off the edge of a cliff or climbing the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, he also once risked his eye. In a story exploring the behind-the-scenes of previous *Mission Impossible* movies, the movie's director, John Woo, described a particularly remarkable stunt from the shoot [6]. Tom's character was embroiled in knife fight, a planned climatic moment being, according to Woo, when the villain "jumps up in the air and lands on Tom and this knife almost cuts his face, and also pretty close to his eye". But wanting the most engaging scene possible, Tom insisted the knife ends up "just right into my eye". Refusing any alternative ("No, no, no. This one's right in the eyes.") and insisting on performing the stunt himself, the choreographers were faced with having to find a way to make it happen, safely. They did use a real knife, with a sharp blade and a point, but attached it to an overhead bar via a cable, so the knife would stop at a specific distance – one quarter of an inch from Tom's eye. If Tom moved, or the cable slipped, it would have been a tragedy. But apparently, he didn't even flinch. I am not sure if I could have been so calm in that situation, but then I have patients tell me they could never inject a needle into an eye, so perhaps you get used to danger.

#RainbowTrain #Cataract #China

A train adorned with rainbows down its side, the Sinopec Lifeline Express hospital train, has been pictured travelling around northwest China to offer free cataract surgeries to local patients in need [7]. Ran as a charity project, it is kitted out and staffed to the standards of any hospital facility, with examination devices, defined ward areas and operating theatres. This initiative allows access to ophthalmic services for some of those who need it most. A lifeline indeed, for patients struggling to engage with essential ophthalmic care.

References

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SECTION EDITOR



Amit Dhalla,

Specialty Registrar Year 3, Rotherham District General Hospital, UK.

amit.dhalla@nhs.net