

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

#AlienEarth #TheEye

One of the best shows to recently start streaming is, in my opinion, *Alien: Earth*. The cosmic horror of the original *Alien* movie still holds up to this day, with the xenomorphs responsible for many sleepless nights as a kid. I definitely watched the movie at far too young of an age, but it's the kind of film made for school sleepovers. And now, *Alien: Earth* is keeping new and seasoned viewers of the xenomorph franchise at the edge of their seat. One of the most memorable new creatures of this series is The Eye, more formally known as Trypanohyncha Ocellus [1]. This intelligent, parasitic monster has an eyeball-like body on tentacles, flinging itself onto its target, then prising out its prey's eyeball and inserting itself in its place, hijacking its host from there. A particularly memorable scene featuring this creature and a sheep happens in episode four, but I won't go into the gory details here. Suffice to say, the internet is abuzz with grossed out reactions, with one site going so far as to call it one of the "most horrifying scenes in recent television history and all the *Alien* canon" [2]. If you can handle it, the show is a must-watch. Thank me later.

#TheHome #Needles

Speaking of horror, Pete Davidson's newest movie, *The Home*, has recently been released. With its trailer racking up almost a million views and a particularly memorable scene involving an eyeball and a needle, it was always going to end up trending [3]. I won't give any spoilers for the movie, but the big reveal is so crazy and so focussed on eyeballs that I almost feel it was written specifically to draw the ire of ophthalmologists worldwide. Davidson has been speaking on the press tour about shooting the scene and it being his actual eye that featured, a prospect that he was not thrilled about. He said he turned up to the shoot one day when there were three doctors who seemed concerned about what was about to happen. Alas, the scene proceeded until one of the doctors had to stop filming to give Davidson a break, claiming that his eye would be damaged if left open for thirty more seconds. Thankfully, he made it through the day without any lasting consequences, and a pretty memorable scene for the movie!

#Claudia #Fringe #Iconic

Pete Davidson isn't the only celebrity to be trending in eye-related news these

days. Claudia Winkleman shared on her social media that she has had recent surgery under the care of her usual ophthalmologist [4]. With a history of high myopia and poor eyesight, she has commented previously that her iconic fringe extending down to her eyes is no bother to her as she struggles to see anyway. But since this most recent procedure, it seems she has had a makeover! With a new curved fringe design debuted at a live event, the style ensured that her eyes were visible. It's a subtle difference, but given her historic relationship with her eyes, it seems to be a significant one. Hopefully this is a sign of increased ocular happiness!

#ChemicalBurn #AirplaneCoffee

I have long held the belief that you should never order coffee on an airplane, something I have been told by many people in my life, but it seems that there are more dangers beyond just drinking it. Arturas Lanchinskas, a third-degree black belt and coach of the Team USA judo squad, was flying to Lima for the Pan American Judo Championships when hot coffee was accidentally splashed into his face by a flight attendant dropping a pot of it [5]. Handily, the passenger that was being served the dropped coffee was a doctor who urged Arturas to irrigate the eye as much as possible. It was not until he landed in Lima that he was able to receive proper medical care and was treated for burns to his face and eye. Once he was back home in New York City, he was assessed at his local ophthalmology unit and diagnosed with a thermal injury and chemical burn to his right eye. This has unfortunately left him with a reduced field of vision out of that eye and permanent photophobia.

#EyeballWorms

A 35-year-old man in India has made headlines recently, having sought an assessment of his red, blurry eye [6]. In what must have been a rather shocking examination, he was seen to have a one-inch worm floating around in the vitreous, very much alive and wriggling. It was removed via a pars plana vitrectomy and found to be *Gnathostoma spinigerum*, a parasite that is often spread through the consumption of undercooked meats. Unfortunately, his vision has not yet returned, but the inflammation was resolving, and he remains under ophthalmic review.

#VisionLoss #Cartwheels

These aren't two hashtags that are often seen together, but this story of a Seattle resident has captivated the masses [7]. When Deborah Cobb was a teenager, she performed 13 cartwheels in a row with friends and suddenly found that she had lost her central vision. After initially playing it off as nothing to worry about, not wanting to lose face with her mates, she only sought medical help the next day when her vision still had not returned. She was found to have bilateral macular haemorrhages and after extensive investigations that initially involved ruling out leukaemia and AIDS, it was decided that her genetics led her to have weaker retinal blood vessels. Her vision did eventually come back after a debilitating few months, but she has been told of an increased risk of early onset macular degeneration. Now working in a career in integrative medicine, she carries a positive outlook, choosing gratitude over fear and being thankful for the lessons in empathy.

References

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