

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

We are officially in 2018. New year, new you. The clock starts to turn to midnight and suddenly the excess and gluttony of the Christmas festive period comes to mind. "This year will be better", we say to ourselves. The most tweeted about New Year's resolutions according to Twitter are the following [1]:

- Exercise
- Read
- Eat healthily
- Save
- Learn something new
- Volunteer

Yup, that sounds about right. All things to make us better, more productive, healthier, and benevolent human beings. While that's all well and good, I've taken inspiration from the latest stories in the social media-sphere.

Number 1: Go get my #eyelids #shaved

Xiong Gaowu is a barber from Chengdu, China who offers a treatment called 'blade wash eyes', as directly translated from Mandarin. Essentially, he uses a sharp razor blade to shave the lid margins of his client's eyes in order to relieve dry and sore eyes. His clients give rave reviews, saying it helps their eyes feel 'refreshed' and 'clean', and improves their vision after. The technique has actually been around for decades, and Gaowu has been performing it since the 1980s. It's a morbidly mesmerising sight, much like watching Dr Pimple Popper excavate her epic pimples. Unilad posted a video (linked below), which I watched incredulously on repeat [2,3]. A local Chengdu ophthalmologist hypothesises that the effect results probably because the gentle shaving opens the clogged Meibomian glands, and therefore provides symptomatic relief. Best part is it costs only £9. Bargain.

Number 2: Go see my #optician for an #eyetest for #driving

The Association of Optometrists recommends 'compulsory eye tests' at least every 10 years for drivers [4-6]. The Department of Transport reported seven people killed and 63 seriously injured in Britain over the last year due to accidents where 'uncorrected, defective eyesight' was a contributory factor. The official legal standard states that a car number plate made after 1 September 2001 must be read from 20 metres; the minimum eyesight for driving is 0.5 (or 6/12 Snellen) with both eyes open, or one eye if that is the only sighted eye; and an adequate field of vision is required. However, only the license plate test is performed at the time of the driving test. Opticians believe this is

inadequate, particularly as any changes in vision are self-reported to the DVLA by the driver.

Number 3: Spend time outdoors with my #children to improve their #eyesight #myopia #shortsighted

Lack of exposure to direct sunlight appears to be a significant risk factor in the progression of myopia in children [7]. An average of two hours per day outdoors is suggested as protective against becoming myopic in children. This two hours a day comes from research done in Australia, which showed that in children of Chinese ethnicity living in Sydney who spend two hours a day outdoors, only 3% developed myopia by age six, versus 30% of children in Singapore. Outdoor activity seems to protect against myopia via the stimulatory effect of light on retinal dopamine production and release [8]. Australian and Chinese researchers are collaborating to build a 'bright classroom' in order to increase children's exposure to light conditions similar to being outdoors [9,10].

Number 4: Put my #Christmas #glitter away until next year

A Swansea woman was nearly blinded after glitter from a Christmas card went into her eye [11-13]. She presented with a painful red eye associated with loss of vision. A pseudo-dendritic corneal lesion was seen, and herpes simplex keratitis suspected. However, on closer examination under higher magnification, a shiny surface was seen in the lesion. Direct questioning prompted the patient to recall that some glitter from a Christmas card had entered her eye. The glitter itself had formed a clump on the corneal surface resembling a dendritic ulcer. Beware those hazardous shiny glitter particles.

Number 5: If all else fails, there's always the #iPhone X #camera. Who needs glasses anyway?

The iPhone X camera produces very clear pictures. And I mean, very clear. So much so that one user tweeted "I'm definitely too ugly to be buying an iPhone X camera" [14], and another tweeted, "The doctors said I have perfect eyes, but the iPhone X camera really makes me question that" [15]. Seemingly, the iPhone X camera makes you see yourself for the bald, bloodshot, wrinkly person you are, and it highlights all the bags under your eyes [16,17]. On the other hand, other users rave about it, saying the iPhone X camera brings their selfies to life. Still others forego selfies altogether and post beautiful, detailed

pictures of landscapes and particularly night photography, where fireworks and city lights are captured in their detailed glory [18]. Watch out though, a new iPhone X will set you back a cool £999.00.

Looks like I've got my work cut out for this year. Until next time.

References

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(All links last accessed January 2018)

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