Disinfection – Critical to Good Eye Health in Contact Lens Wearers

As eye care professionals, we strive to provide our patients with the best vision possible, and safeguard the health of their eyes. With today's advanced contact lens designs, we are able to address the vision aspect of most patients regardless of how serious or subtle their vision problems or the variety of needs they may have. However, in providing the best vision, we have an additional challenge to protecting the health of our patients' eyes.

Contact lens disinfection is essential in eye health for the contact lens wearer. Lack of proper contact lens cleaning and disinfection can lead to inflammation and infection. There are two important factors to consider that affect lens disinfection: 1) the inherent capability of the lens care solution to disinfect; and 2) the ability of the patient to comply with the prescribed lens care regimen. As an industry, we have made great strides in providing lens care solutions that are efficacious. With standards in place, such as ISO and FDA-specified testing and using the American Type Culture Collection strains of organisms, both eye care professionals and those in industry have test results that not only lend themselves to comparison, but are reproducible and verified. Having a clear understanding of the efficaciousness of available products allows us to recommend the contact lens care solution that is best suited for our patients.

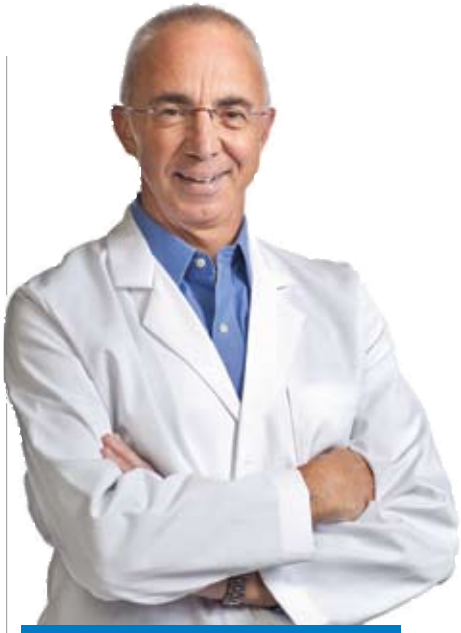
Polyhexamethylene biguanide and polyquaternium-1 have been in the marketplace for years and have proven to be highly safe and efficacious disinfectants, but you shouldn't confuse their long history with a stagnant research culture. Lens care solutions continue to evolve, and focus is starting to shift to solution formulations in total and away from individual components.

LENS CARE SOLUTIONS CONTINUE TO EVOLVE.

Perhaps it is time to look at how the world is changing and more virulent organisms, such as *Acanthamoeba* and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, are growing in prevalence. As we learn more about these strains of microorganisms and to what degree patients comply with lens cleaning regimens, additional testing that includes clinical isolates collected from patients may be included in testing protocols. Indeed, collaboration between eye care professionals, industry, and regulatory bodies on testing protocols is ongoing.

As the caretakers of our patients' eyes, we have a responsibility to keep disinfection top of mind. We should remember: that lens care solutions have varying levels of antimicrobial effectiveness, that recommending the best solution for your patient is important, and that your recommendation to the patient has impact. We should strive to increase the disinfection efficacy of contact lens solutions and to improve compliance of contact lens wearers with their lens care regimens.

Thanks for reading. I'm looking forward to your comments at JoesView@bausch.com.



JOE'S VIEW
with Joe Barr, OD, MS, FAAO
Bausch + Lomb

Joe Barr

Joe Barr, OD, MS, FAAO
Vice President
Global Clinical & Medical Affairs
and Professional Services
Vision Care, Bausch + Lomb

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