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Bausch & Lomb
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Vol. 20 - October 2007

Bausch & Lomb

The Five Myths of Masking Astigmatism: Myth #5

Myth #1 – Visual acuity with low cylinder toric lenses is not significantly better than with single vision spherical lens correction

Myth #2 – The risk of variable vision with toric lenses is too much of a trade-off relative to the assurance of stable spherical vision

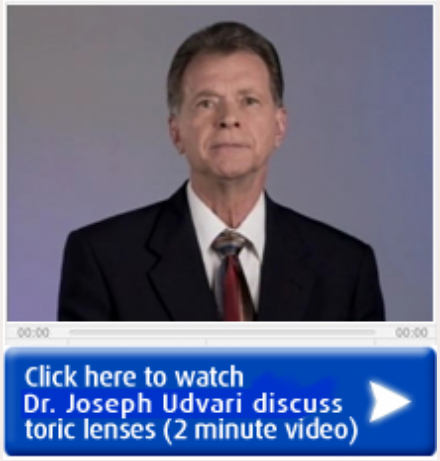
Myth #3 – Toric lenses aren't as comfortable as spherical lenses

Myth #4 – Significantly more chair time is required to fit toric lenses

Myth #5 – The higher cost to patients of toric lenses is a barrier relative to spherical lenses

In our last edition, we discussed the myth that it takes significantly more chair time to fit toric lenses. In this edition we will discuss another common misperception: the higher cost of toric lenses is a barrier for patients when compared to spherical lenses.

If we look historically across a wide range of product categories we find that consumers want to try new things and are willing to pay more to get better outcomes. In fact, recent studies in the eye care industry show that the large majority (90%) of current contact lens patients are interested in discussing innovations in contact lenses with their practitioner and have an increased appreciation for eye care professionals who inform them about new technology.[1]



A common assumption when considering fitting masked low-cylinder patients is that the higher cost will deter them from wanting to be fit with toric lenses. As eye care practitioners, it's our responsibility to give patients every opportunity to take advantage of the newest technologies, explain the options and provide our professional recommendation so patients can make informed decisions. Presuming certain options are too expensive for patients could undermine not only the application of your clinical expertise but also your patient's comprehensive understanding. Once potential options have been discussed, the patient will decide which option is right for them, including their desire to pay a premium for advanced technology that provides exceptionally crisp vision and healthy eyes.

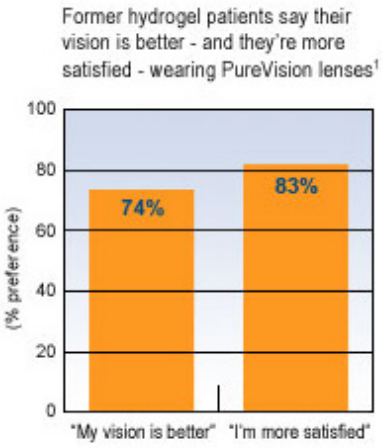
As we discussed in previous editions of this series, today's toric lens wearers can experience exceptional rotational stability and are now looking for additional features to further enhance their experience. Astigmatic patients of course want to achieve excellent vision from a toric lens. However, along with that benefit, they also expect longer wear times, better end of day comfort and white, healthy eyes.

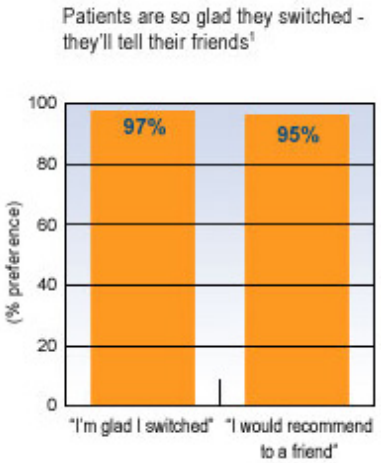
By waiting for patients to start complaining about their lens' quality, or worse, not hearing about it and risk losing a patient, we're only giving a subset of our patients access to the latest technology. Therefore, even if patients seem satisfied, be proactive with offering new technologies to them, studies suggest they will most likely be glad you did. The added benefit for you is that you'll have distinguished your practice which can strengthen patient loyalty.

Here's a recent example: patients and doctors the world-over have been extremely satisfied with the Bausch & Lomb Soflens® Toric lens. Yet, as you may be aware, a newer technology at a marginally higher price point is now available: the Bausch & Lomb PureVision® Toric silicone hydrogel lens. This lens utilizes all the features that made the Soflens Toric a success, but adds sophisticated new material properties and advanced anterior aspheric optics to give patients a whole new level of satisfaction.

In a study where nearly 100 hydrogel toric and multifocal patients upgraded to the new PureVision Toric and Multi-Focal silicone hydrogel line of lenses, patients overwhelmingly preferred the new lenses.[2]

Specifically, here's what was found:





Patient's comments after being refit into the newer technology included[1]:

> "I like the comfort and vision better."
>
> "My vision is much crisper with these lenses."
>
> "My eyes are whiter."

Across many variables, patients are clearly having very positive experiences when upgrading to the Bausch & Lomb PureVision Toric lenses. Watch the 2-minute video at this link www.bausch.com/udvari to hear how Dr. Joseph Udvari found his patients wanted to achieve better visual outcomes and were willing to pay the incremental costs.

This concludes our assessment of the five myths surrounding masking astigmatism. I hope you've found them interesting and informative, and that you see the great benefits of fitting your low cylinder astigmatic patients with PureVision Toric lenses. To read past editions of this series visit www.eyematters.com/archive.asp.

Sincerely,
Mike Pier, OD
Director, Professional Relations – Practitioner Education

1. Results from a 2005 independent survey of 300 current contact lens wearers conducted by SHC & Associates.
2. 2007 Bausch & Lomb study data on file.

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