



CONTACT LENSES

Reflection and discussion

In our last CPD article (February 2020), we looked at the concept of writing up a spectacle dispense as a 'case', to be used for reflection or to discuss with peers. In this article, we shall consider the same for contact lens patients.

As peer discussion/review is mandatory for contact lens opticians and optometrists as part of the General Optical Council's (GOC) continuing education and training (CET) scheme, members of these professional roles will likely be familiar in thinking of their contact lens patient encounters in terms of cases. It may be that the reader already has experience of taking a patient case and using it for peer review with colleagues. However, there is still much for us to consider to help this become a more familiar and regular practice for all.

As with dispensing cases, we need to consider whether we are looking to use our patient encounter for personal reflection, or if we wish to use it to engage in discussion with peers. Hopefully, the latter would also lead to personal reflection.

Even for personal reflection, it can still be helpful to physically write or type the case up to kick start the reflective process, as opposed to just contemplating the information you may be viewing on computer or paper records.

CASE CONSTRUCTION

So, what do we need to include in a contact lens case? There will be an abundance of information you gathered during the patient appointment, but not all of it may be relevant to include. Details of what should be included in general contact lens patient records can be found in the Advice and Guidance section of the ABDO website. This advice includes essential information for record keeping that for case discussion we need to ensure we do not include, i.e. it is imperative our cases are anonymised for discussion purposes.

What you do choose to include will depend on why you have chosen the case. It may be an interesting clinical case owing to the prescription or fitting parameters, or that the patient was presenting with signs and symptoms that required some investigation. With all of these, it will be essential to include prescription, fitting parameters and lens specification, as well as details of history and symptoms, wearing habits, medications, occupation and lifestyle factors. Sometimes it can be changes in these that cause the issue relating to contact lens wear.

Understanding what the patient's medications are for, and how those medications may affect the patient systemically, is important. Relevant details of slit lamp



Step-by-step problem solving can be essential

findings would also be necessary – and don't forget to include the grading system you use as not all are the same.

It may not always be relevant to discuss the specific brand of a contact lens. However, depending on the patient situation, an understanding of the contact lens material and its specific properties may be crucial, as can be the optical design of the lens. Each manufacturer's methods of making the lens more wettable, or stabilising a toric lens, can vary greatly and changing factors such as these could be relevant to the case.

Often when a contact lens patient presents with a problem, be it symptoms they are experiencing or signs picked up at an appointment, it is not always straightforward as to what is causing the issues and therefore what the solution to the problem may be.

Many issues can be multi-factorial, such as complications with dry eye. For example, this may be in part due to the contact lens, the patient's environment, physiology or medication. The Tear Film and Ocular Surface Society (TFOS) DEWS II report is a great resource to understand more about factors in dry eye.

STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Our practice often requires investigation through questioning and implementing strategies to find the correct solution to resolve the individual patient's problem. This means that reflection and discussion on

differential diagnosis, and step-by-step problem solving, can be essential in contact lens practice.

For example: a patient presents for their annual aftercare and is reporting reduced wear time. Questioning should uncover when they are experiencing problems, such as the commonly-encountered, end-of-day discomfort. However, other factors need to be considered, such as:

- Has the patients environment changed?
- Have they developed pathology such as meibomian gland dysfunction?
- Are they compliant with their lens regime?
- Have they any systemic pathology?
- Have they commenced or changed medications?

The list goes on

It may be that more than one factor is at play and so the strategy to solve the issue may require working through possible remedies one at a time, so that you understand which helped manage the situation.

When we are presenting cases for discussion, we need to include all the information that will allow your peers to analyse the patient circumstances and your chosen management strategy. When you are writing up a case for reflection, similarly you need to have all the relevant information included, so that you can justify your actions and consider other approaches and areas that may not have been immediately evident at the time.

Another important factor is to allow you to highlight areas where you may benefit from further education and understanding, to enable you to manage a similar

patient situation more appropriately, and/or swiftly, in the future.

Although we do not provide a template for writing up contact lens case records, as there will be much variety in what is included for reflection or discussion, we have produced a tool for case reflection which is available in the Professional Development Toolbox on the ABDO website.

This simple tool can be used for personal reflection on its own, or for reflection after case discussion with your peers. Previous articles on reflection in this CPD series can also be accessed in the Professional Development Toolbox within the ABDO CET pages.

RESOURCES

ABDO ADVICE & GUIDANCE ON CONTACT LENS RECORDS	www.abdo.org.uk/regulation-and-policy/advice-and-guidelines/clinical/patient-record-cards/contact-lens-records
TFOS DEWS II REPORT	www.tfosdewsreport.org
CASE REFLECTION TOOL AND REFLECTION CPD ARTICLES	www.abdo.org.uk/dashboard/events-cet/professional-development-toolbox

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