Practitioner and patient acceptance of a new silicone hydrogel contact lens

Anna Sulley reviews the results of a study to gain feedback on Acuvue Oasys

MAY 2005 SAW the launch in the UK of a new spherical silicone hydrogel lens, Acuvue Oasys with Hydraclear Plus from Johnson & Johnson Vision Care. With over 50 per cent of contact lens wearers suffering contact lens-related dry eye symptoms and a significant proportion of wearers dropping out of lens wear due to dryness, this lens has been developed to help meet the needs of these patients even in challenging environments. This is the second lens to be launched by Johnson & Johnson in the Ultra Comfort Series, the first being Acuvue Advance with Hydraclear last year. The Acuvue Advance aims to deliver all-day comfort for a wide range of patients; and now has an expanded power range (+8.00 to -12.00) and there will soon be a toric design launched in the UK market.

Acuvue Oasys (with its enhanced material properties) is positioned to build on the significant comfort performance of Acuvue Advance) claims to offer relief from contact lens-related dryness for existing wearers, in particular those exposed to challenging environments, such as extended computer use, air conditioning or overnight lens wear.

The lens parameters and material properties are summarised in Table 1.

This article summarises the results from over 20 practitioners who had the opportunity to assess this new lens prior to launch, and also feedback direct from patients trialing the new lens.

**METHODOLOGY**

To gain initial feedback on Acuvue Oasys, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care commissioned an independent market research agency to survey eye care practitioners in the UK. Participating practitioners were trained on fitting the new lens and then asked to prescribe it to patients as appropriate for a two-week period. Patients were invited to return to the practice for a check up and to complete a product evaluation questionnaire. Based on patient feedback and their fitting experience, the practitioners were asked to complete a similar questionnaire which asked a wide range of questions including how likely they were to prescribe and recommend it to various types of patients and to rate various attributes of the lens’ performance. A total of 158 patient and 20 practitioner questionnaires were collected and analysed. The results of the Acuvue Oasys evaluation trials are summarised below.

**LENS TRIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The demographics of the 158 patients participating in the evaluation were in line with the current contact lens wearing population, with a female and 26-35 year old bias. They were predominantly existing wearers (96 per cent), wearing a mixture of daily disposable and reusable (hydrogel and silicone hydrogel) lens products from all leading manufacturers, with a bias towards Johnson & Johnson products as many of the practitioners were in Acuvue Centre of Excellence practices. Three in 10 wore the lenses on a weekly extended wear basis, this being a wearing schedule new for most since only 5 per cent had occasionally slept in their previous lenses. The modality worn during the trial was closely in accordance with their practitioner’s recommendation, with 66 per cent recommending daily wear.

**DRYNESS SYMPTOMS**

Seventy-six per cent of patients participating in the trial claimed to suffer from dryness symptoms ‘Regularly’ or ‘Occasion-

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**Table 1**

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<tr>
<th>Summary of parameters and material properties for Acuvue Oasys with Hydraclear Plus</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Water content</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FDA classification</strong></td>
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<td><em><em>Oxygen transmissibility (DK/t</em>)</em>*</td>
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<td><strong>Visibility tint</strong></td>
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<td><strong>UV blocking</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Recommended wear schedule</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Initial power range</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Base curve (BOZR)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Diameter</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Centre thickness</strong></td>
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* Fatt units at 35°C, edge & boundary corrected values for a ~3.00D lens
* Exceeds daily and overnight wear oxygen requirements5, 6
ally’, with most of those only experiencing the symptoms when wearing contact lenses (72 per cent). The incidence of suffering from dryness symptoms with previous lenses increases towards the end of the day, with only 30 per cent experiencing discomfort or dryness with lenses in the morning, compared to 68 per cent in the late evening (Figure 1). The most common situations or environments where these patients experienced dry eye symptoms were when in air conditioning, when tired, with computer work and in smoky places, with the symptoms tending to make them feel on a personal level tired, distracted and frustrated.

On refitting these patients with Oasys, they were much more satisfied with the new lens, saying it outperformed their original lens in areas such as comfort at end of day, comfort in all environments and when they would often experience dry eye.

**PATIENT SATISFACTION RESULTS**

Having completed the trial evaluation of Acuvue Oasys, eight out of 10 patients were ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very Satisfied’ with the new lenses, and for existing wearers they were significantly more likely to be ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very Satisfied’ with Acuvue Oasys than the lenses they were wearing prior to trial (81 per cent compared to 57 per cent).

Acuvue Oasys was rated on a wide range of characteristics and performed well both on a stand alone basis and compared to previous lenses (Figure 2). Wearers were questioned with regards to vision, comfort and ease of use, and even in challenging environments or at the end of day a significant majority rated the lens as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’. Over eight out of 10 patients (82 per cent) rated the overall opinion of the lens as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’ which was consistent with the positive comfort ratings and almost eight in 10 patients (77 per cent) were ‘Never’ or ‘Barely’ aware of their lenses while wearing them. Some 74 per cent of patients said they would ‘Definitely’ or ‘Probably’ buy the lens having tried it, with this figure increasing to 80 per cent if recommended by their practitioner; the level of interest to buy was strong across all wearers of previous lens types. It was also shown that for 67 per cent of patients, their practitioner played a strong role in influencing them to trial Acuvue Oasys, again highlighting the power of practitioner recommendation. When advising patients that Oasys would cost around £20 to £22 per month (daily wear, excluding solutions), two-thirds of patients felt that lenses were better than average value.

**PRACTITIONER RESULTS**

Acuvue Oasys was very well received by the trialing practitioners with all ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very Satisfied’ with them and 90 per cent feeling they were ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very’ ‘New & Different’. Nearly eight out of 10 of practitioners said the new lens performed even better than expected, despite high expectations, where 71 per cent had rated the lens as ‘Excellent’ following initial training. Eighty-six per cent of the practitioners perceived the lenses as ‘Very’ or ‘Fairly Good Value’ for cost price, with eight out of 10 perceiving them as ‘Very’ or ‘Fairly Good Value’ for patients.

When asked which type of patients they felt the lenses were most appropriate for, all the practitioners stated they were appropriate for those wearers with dryness symptoms, lapsed wearers and 95 per cent said they were suitable for patients seeking extended wear.

A couple of months after the conclusion of the trial, the practitioners were contacted
for spontaneous feedback having had an opportunity to gain further experience with Acuvue Oasys.

Overall feedback was positive, including such comments as: ‘This is a lens that can really get “drop outs” back into lens wear again’.

CONCLUSIONS
This new silicone hydrogel is positioned as a lens for existing wearers who experience contact lens-related dryness or who are exposed to challenging environments.

These symptoms are commonly experienced by contact lens wearers today, indeed in this trial over three quarters of patients had dryness symptoms with their habitual lenses.

These are potentially the drop-outs of the future. The next generation proprietary technology Hydraclear Plus, is designed to offer a better solution. A previous publication has reported on the material properties of Acuvue Oasys.4

This survey suggests these properties deliver an exceptionally high level of patient and practitioner satisfaction, and supports the view that this product provides relief from contact lens dryness symptoms.

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References
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6 Harvitt DM & Bonano JA. Re-evaluation of the oxygen diffusion model for predicting minimum contact lens Dk/t values needed to avoid corneal anoxia. Optom Vis Sci, 1999; 76(10): 712-719.

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