



Trends in UK

Dr Philip Morgan reports on the 16th annual Eurolens Research survey into contact lens prescribing habits

For the past 16 years we have polled the UK contact lens market to provide information for practitioners and others in the industry. We adopt a proactive survey method. One thousand registered practitioners (700 optometrists and 300 contact lens opticians) are picked at random from the GOC register at the start of the calendar year, and each is sent a paper questionnaire with a reply-paid envelope to provide information about the first 10 patients fitted with contact lenses after receipt. We capture data about the following: date of fitting, new fit or refit, age and sex of patient, lens material, lens design, frequency of replacement, days per week of wear, modality (daily or extended wear) and care system.

Our response in 2011 was a little lower than the historic average – 83 practitioners (43 contact lens opticians and 28 optometrists with two 'not reported') provided information about 690 contact lens fits. As usual, a weighting was applied to each fit to more appropriately represent busier contact lens prescribers.

The mean age of patients fitted with contact lenses has edged up in recent times. It was 36.2 years in 2011, with lenses fitted to patients from four to 85 years. The typical soft lens wearer is now four years older than 15 years ago. As expected, most lenses were prescribed to females (63 per cent).

Rigid vs soft lens fits

Rigid lenses remain a minority of lens fits, accounting for 2 per cent of new fits in 2011, compared with 11 per cent of refits (Figure 1).

Soft lens details

Silicone hydrogels now represent 50 per cent of new soft lenses prescribed and a higher proportion of refits. If non-daily disposable spherical lenses are analysed, this material type

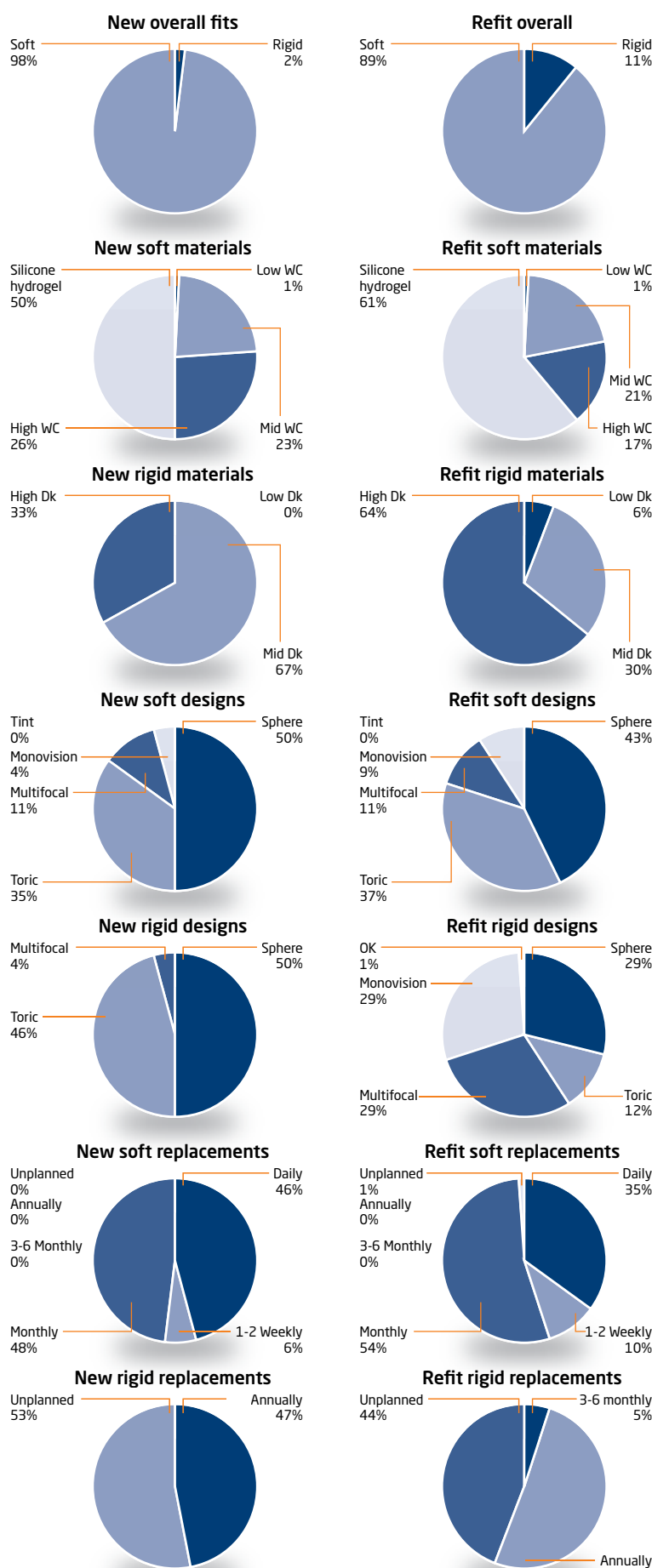


Figure 1
Major findings from the 2011 survey



contact lens prescribing 2011



The mean age of patients fitted with contact lenses has edged up in recent times

accounts for 88 per cent of lenses prescribed (Figure 2), a dramatic increase since the wide-scale adoption of these lenses less than a decade ago. Multifocals have demonstrated a rise in usage over the past five years and currently represent 11 per cent of soft lens fits. Toric lens use remains very healthy at more than one in three soft lens fits. Soft replacements are usually daily disposable (46 per cent of new fits) or on a monthly basis (48 per

cent of refits) with the remainder 1-2 weekly replacement. Multipurpose solutions accounted for 92 per cent of care systems prescribed for soft lenses.

Rigid lens details

Rigid lens prescribing was similar to previous years. Low Dk lenses were rarely prescribed and multifocal and monovision lenses were a widely prescribed modality for refit rigid lenses. ●

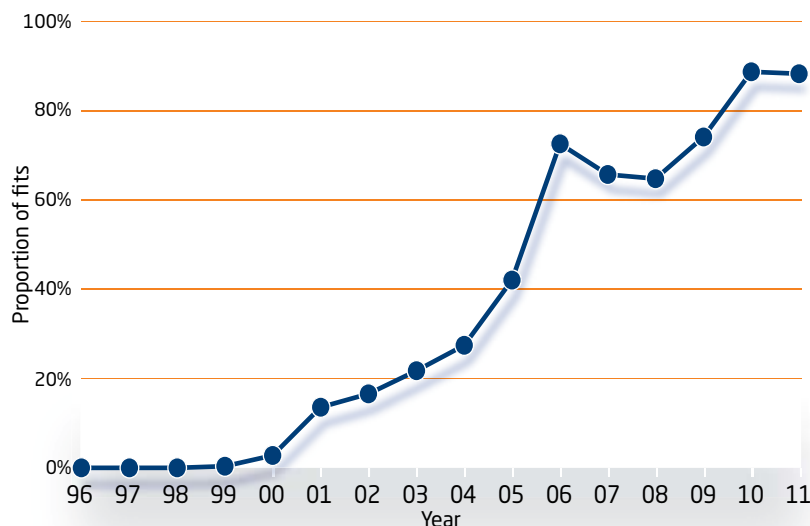


Figure 2 Use of silicone hydrogel materials for non-daily disposable spherical soft lenses

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