

Researchers establish link between dry eye disease and dehydration

October 5 2012

Dry eye disease (DED) is a condition which can cause extreme discomfort and lead to eye damage. While difficult to establish the full costs of this condition to healthcare and society in the UK, it is estimated that current prescription treatments such as eye drops cost the NHS £32 million per year (in England alone). Because many individuals suffering from DED self-treat by buying over-the-counter medications (e.g. artificial tears) the true cost of DED is likely to be significantly higher. This new link suggests that ensuring DED sufferers are fully hydrated could alleviate DED symptoms.

Prof. Neil Walsh of the School of Sport, Health & Exercise Sciences explained: "We've been researching hydration in a number of groups of individuals, from athletes to the military. Having proven that a test for [dry eye](#) disease was effective in assessing hydration in normal healthy participants, it was a small step to turn the research on its head and wonder whether hydration was involved in dry eye disease. We were surprised to realise that no published research had investigated any connection between dry eye disease and hydration."

"From our work so far, we believe that hydration is involved in dry eye disease and believe that increasing fluid intake might reduce symptoms in patients with dry [eye disease](#)."

A small scale trial with older in-patients at a hospital, who were admitted for other conditions but also had DED, showed that ensuring good hydration can ease the condition. There is now scope to extend this

research and offer a cost effective means of reducing this uncomfortable and potentially damaging condition.

Getting older is often listed as one of the factors leading to DED. It is hardly surprising then, that this condition is most prevalent among older people, as older people are also often susceptible to being dehydrated. They often have medical conditions where the side effects of the medicines they take may lead to [dehydration](#) and DE.

Provided by Bangor University

Citation: Researchers establish link between dry eye disease and dehydration (2012, October 5) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-link-eye-disease-dehydration.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--