

## **Altacor and NO7 dry eye diagnosis trial provides quick results**

**Cambridge UK, 1 March 2012** – With so much pressure on ‘chair time’ it is difficult for practitioners to investigate the causes of itchy eyes, and yet frequently it is the reason why patients give up using their contact lenses. To help opticians diagnose dry eye quickly and more accurately, Altacor, the ophthalmic products specialists, and No7 the contact lenses manufacturer have collaborated on a trial and the initial results have been very positive.



Andrew Merry Optometrists were one of the first to join the trial in which self-contained dry eye diagnostic kits were provided free of charge by Altacor and No7, and the opticians were trained in how to use them.

Janet Wilkinson of Andrew Merry Optometrists says:

“The trial went extremely well. People often come in saying they have itchy eyes or a burning sensation and are thinking of stopping wearing their contact lenses. Others think they need a new prescription because their vision is starting to blur.

“Normally we would ask a few questions and then recommend eye drops, but we wouldn’t always be able to do any specific tests as appointment time can be limited.

“In the trial, we assessed everyone that complained of dry eye. The kits contained a Lissamine green stain which we can use to examine the eye and look at tear break-up time.”

The diagnostic kit was developed by Altacor and No7 following consultation with opticians. It provides everything needed in one box and is sufficient for testing 10 patients. It helps to identify what type of eye treatment will be most effective.

Tony Whyatt of Altacor, the company behind the Clinitas range explains that tears have three different layers: oily (on top, prevents evaporation of the watery layer), watery (bulk of tears), mucus (on the surface of the eye).

He says: “Dry eye is a term used for a variety of tear film disorders that result in the inadequate wetting of the eye, which includes insufficient tear production or too rapid evaporation. The test kit is able to identify which elements are damaged and this will help determine the most effective treatment, for example, a lubricating solution will help if the oily layer is reduced.”

“The tests helped us to be much more accurate in our diagnosis,” explained Janet.

“Each patient is given a product or a combination of products from the Clinitas range to try, and then invited for a follow up visit 7-10 days later. If the patient has stuck to their regime we normally see great results then. People come back in smiling and often say this is because their eyes feel more comfortable.”

A stinging sensation is sometimes caused by preservatives in eye treatments, but this is not a problem with the Altacor drops as Clinitas Soothe is preservative free.

Tony Hodgson, Sales Executive from No7 Contact Lenses is extremely pleased with the way that the trial has gone. He says:

“Initially we started with 60 kits but the demand has been such that we have distributed more than this. The test is very quick, and easy to do, and it provides an instant result and a potential solution.

“We see discomfort with contact lenses as a growing problem and often opticians don’t realise that it is a problem with the tear layer and instead offer replacement lenses. However using Clinitas Soothe or Hydrate may be sufficient to solve the problem.”

Janet Wilkinson adds: “There’s an ageing population in this area, so dry eye is particularly prevalent, but we are seeing it right across the board in all ages, even children. Our lifestyles, especially air conditioning and central heating, are making it more common. Computers are often a factor because it’s too easy to keep concentrating on the screen and forgetting to blink. Women going through hormonal changes are particularly at risk of dry eye.

“Where possible, prevention is better than cure. As we are seeing more and more dry eye problems I feel prescribing the Clinitas gel as an overnight moisturiser really helps.”

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## **Contacts**

Dr Fran Crawford, CEO +44 (0)1223 421411

## **About Altacor**

Altacor is a specialty ophthalmology company with a portfolio of marketed pharmaceutical products and a diverse development pipeline. The Company’s portfolio is focused on ocular surface diseases, glaucoma/glaucoma surgery and retinal diseases. The Company differentiates its products primarily through formulation or reprofiling existing compounds with established clinical activity and systemic safety.

Altacor has five products marketed in the UK and Ireland which are commercialised through its own sales and marketing organisation and network. Clinitas and Clinitas GEL are prescription products for the treatment of moderate dry eye conditions and are gaining acceptance by clinicians nationwide. The Clinitas range, comprising Clinitas Hydrate, Clinitas Soothe and Clinitas Ultra 3, are also for treating the major causes of dry eye, and are sold to the retail market via pharmacists and opticians.

Altacor is developing its Blepharitis range of products to loosen and remove Meibomian secretions, which underlie blepharitis, and an ‘AREDS’ formula chocolate for the maintenance of healthy vision. AREDS is a well-established formula that slows the progression of age-related macular degeneration.