

Altacor supports National Eye Health Week

Cambridge UK, 10 September 2012 – Eye health check-ups aren't just for people who need glasses, that was the theme of a series of local radio interviews organised by Altacor, specialist ophthalmic products company, in support of National Eye Health Week.



The interviews, held with contact lens optician Nick Atkins from PTR Consultants - discussed the breadth of health conditions that can be picked up by a check-up including diabetes and high blood pressure - they have been broadcast on local and community radio stations across the country.

Nick also talked about Dry Eye, a condition that although extremely common is often disregarded, which can lead to mild and in some cases severe problems with one or both eyes.

He commented that, "The characteristic symptom of 'dry eye' is scratchy or itchy feeling eyes that look red rimmed and may be watery. This makes the condition difficult to recognise and GPs may mistake it as a being the result of an eye infection or hay fever. So I would always recommend that an optometrist should be first port of call rather than the doctor."

He continued, "Often people will suffer in silence from dry eye. We have probably all had a long day in the office or behind the wheel of the car and experienced uncomfortable eyes at the end of it. Modern environments such as air-conditioned offices, less fruit and vegetable intake and long hours staring at a computer screen all contribute to problems with the tear film.

Gareth Thomas of Altacor says: "Lubrication of the eye is very sophisticated. The eye is bathed in a film of tears every time you blink. This film has a watery inside contained by an oily outside layer to reduce evaporation, and a lubricant on the innermost layer nearest the eyeball. These delicate layers can easily be disrupted.

"Many people report that their eyes tire easily and feel dry when looking at a computer or television screen. This is because you blink less when concentrating and this gives more time for the film of tears, that lubricate the eye to evaporate, creating dry spots on the corneal surface. But the problem is easily remedied."

Dry eye is easy to treat and now easier to diagnose. Aylesbury optician Mr Vaja of Nu-Sight Opticians was one of the first opticians to participate in a trial by Altacor and No7, the contact lenses manufacturer. It included the use of a special diagnostic kit to help identify dry eye. Mr Vaja has now developed a strong diagnostic procedure, which gives him confidence to identify symptoms of dry eye.

Mr Vaja explains, "Before participating in the trial I used to offer some non-specific eye drops to soothe the irritation. Now having used the diagnostic kit I am more confident in understanding the

cause of the problem and have seen the benefits of eye drops and lubricants that are specifically designed to target the different parts of the tear layer to treat dry eye.

Tony Hodgson from No7 Contact Lenses, has been analysing feedback from the trial and said that many of the opticians, like Mr Vaja, have since gone on to set up dry eye clinics themselves following their experiences with the kit. He says:

"Often opticians don't realise that a problem with the tear layer may make a patient's eyes uncomfortable and instead offer replacement lenses. However using Clinitas Soothe or Hydrate may be sufficient to solve the problem."

Nick continues. "The public don't think to use dry eye drops and may be wary of them, but they can help repair the surface of the eye and provide prolonged relief. With advice of optometrist, we should perhaps all use these more routinely in our modern day lives, for example a drop at morning and a drop at night."

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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 preparing to launch its Blepharitis range of products to loosen and remove Meibomian secretions, which underlie blepharitis. The Company is also developing EYEBAR, an 'AREDS' formula chocolate for the maintenance of healthy vision, for launch in the UK in mid-2013. AREDS is a well-established formula that slows the progression of age-related macular degeneration.