

Computer vision syndrome in the time of COVID-19: Is blue-blocking lens a panacea for digital eye strain?

Dear Editor,

The lockdown has led to an increase in screen time and its influence on the wellbeing of users is a concern to healthcare practitioners.^[1] Computer vision syndrome (CVS) is one of these health concerns. CVS, also known as Digital Eye Strain (DES), describes a group of eye- and vision-related problems that result from prolonged use of electronic gadgets. DES symptoms fall into two categories: internal symptoms may be linked to the user's accommodative or binocular vision stress and external symptoms may be related to dry eye.^[2] It has been suggested that the short-wavelength blue light emitted from these devices may be the reason for these symptoms,^[2] although the evidence to support such a claim is minimal. Though these devices generate blue light in the 380–450 nm range, the radiant energy is at such low levels that they do not in any way represent a biohazard.^[3]

Makers of blue light filter lenses claim that the blue light emitted from the computer and mobile phones may cause eye damage.^[2] However, a recent systematic review reported a low evidence in alleviating DES symptoms using blue-blocking filters.^[4] More recent work by Rosenfield *et al.* (2020) found no difference in symptoms of DES between lenses with a blue-blocking filter and a clear CR 39 lens.^[5] So, there is little support for this treatment paradigm at this time.

A comprehensive care plan focusing on control of DES symptoms becomes paramount in the current context. It is important to consider some evidence-based approaches to prevent and decrease DES symptoms, like blinking often, taking breaks from screen time, set devices to night mode, and enlarging screen type sizes for easier reading.^[2] Also, more people should be made aware of the preventive measures that can be taken to prevent DES.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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