

# DEWS Introduction

## Introduction to the Report of the International Dry Eye WorkShop (2007)

**D**ry eye disease is a common yet frequently under-recognized clinical condition whose etiology and management challenge clinicians and researchers alike. Advances in the understanding of the disease have been made over the past 10 years in areas of epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical manifestation, and possible therapy. This volume represents the work of many contributors over a long period of deliberation and through an iterative process that included collection of data, presentation of summary reports in a conference format, and harmonization of reports by a writing team with interactive commentary by the entire group of participants in an international workshop.

### History

In 1994, a workshop sponsored by the National Eye Institute and supported by industry convened a group of scientists, clinicians, and researchers interested in dry eye to clarify the definition and characteristics of dry eye disease and to recommend reliable parameters for conduct of clinical research and conduct of clinical trials for dry eye disease.<sup>1</sup> The report of that workshop has served as a solid resource in the field for over 10 years, but the explosion of information in both basic and clinical research in the interim warranted repetition of the process. An initiative was suggested by Kazuo Tsubota, MD, and endorsed by Michael A. Lemp, MD, to recruit an international panel of experts in dry eye disease to accomplish such a task, and preliminary meetings were held in 2001.<sup>2</sup> Selection of the participants was based upon their prior history of peer-reviewed publication, level of participation in previous dry eye meetings (including the NEI/Industry Workshop), and collaboration with acknowledged experts in the field. The immensity of the task became immediately apparent and the coordinating support of The Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society (TFOS) was solicited. David A. Sullivan, PhD, President of TFOS, committed the organizational and administrative support of TFOS and secured broad financial support from international corporations to facilitate the international Dry Eye WorkShop (DEWS).

### Process

The DEWS effort was chaired by Anthony J. Bron, FRCS, and directed by a Steering Committee that proposed guidelines for the determination of acceptable levels of evidence and methods of documentation to support such evidence. The first step involved the formation of subcommittees: Definition and Classification; Epidemiology; Diagnosis; Research; Clinical Trials, and Management and Therapy, in addition to a Communications and Industrial Liaison committee. The scientific subcommittees were charged with identifying contemporary, evidence-based information about various aspects of dry eye disease and summarizing the data in a conceptual format that was well documented and well referenced. Chairpersons of the subcommittees developed goals for each of the working committees and were responsible for coordinating the work. The second step was to hold a 3-day meeting, during which committee reports were presented to the entire group and discussed in an open forum, with all participants invited to comment or suggest additions to the reports. Finally, a writing team was established to review the reports and attempt to harmonize the presentation and cross-reference the information and concepts presented. The process of review and consideration was ongoing over a period of several years. Reports were posted on an internet website for review and commentary by all participants and comments received were submitted to the subcommittee chairpersons for evaluation and response. The draft product was submitted to the Steering Committee for final review and approval. All participants were required to provide disclosures of financial

arrangements or conflicts of interest, and this information is posted on the website ([www.tearfilm.org](http://www.tearfilm.org)) and published at the end of this issue.

### **Product**

In addition to the report published in this special issue of *The Ocular Surface*, the DEWS findings are available in an expanded electronic form on the TFOS website ([www.tearfilm.org](http://www.tearfilm.org)). This latter provision has allowed the presentation of material excluded from the journal for reasons of space, such as appendices, extended bibliographies, and standardized templates describing diagnostic tests. Each chapter addresses a topic relevant to the understanding of dry eye disease and the combined publication represents a resource that will be valuable to clinicians, epidemiologists, basic and clinical scientists, and members of the pharmaceutical industry. The reader is encouraged to use these resources extensively to support and enhance discussions in the text.

### **Acknowledgements**

Because the DEWS report represents the integrated work of many participants, individual authorship is not assigned to the overall report or its chapters. Complete listing of the DEWS membership is shown on the following pages, and Subcommittee members are designated in a footnote on the title page of each chapter. Special recognition of the efforts of several participants in the production of this report is appropriate. The officers and administrative staff of The Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society (TFOS), including David A. Sullivan, PhD, Rose M. Sullivan, and Amy G. Sullivan, were essential to the compilation and circulation of schedules and documents. Christopher Paterson, PhD, facilitated the open meeting and discussion of the preliminary reports. Elizabeth Fini, PhD, recorded and transcribed the proceedings of the open discussion at the meeting. Anthony J. Bron, FRCS, served with dedication and energy as both Chairman of the entire DEWS workshop and Chairman of the writing team. In his role as Chairman of the Communication Subcommittee and member of the writing team, Gary N. Foulks, MD, provided valuable contributions both scientifically and organizationally.

### REFERENCES

1. Lemp MA. Report of the National Eye Institute/Industry Workshop on Clinical Trials in Dry Eye. *CLAO J* 1995;21:221-32
2. Dogru M, Stern ME, Smith JA, Foulks GN, Lemp MA, Tsubota K. Changing trends in the definition and diagnosis of dry eyes. *Am J Ophthalmol* 2005;140:507-8