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The first global consensus report on meibomian gland dysfunction

The first global consensus report on meibomian gland dysfunction — a major cause of lid disease and evaporative dry eye — has been published in a special issue of the Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science (IOVS) journal. The report is the result of findings from a two-year-long workshop composed of more than 50 leading clinical and basic research experts from around the world.

The workshop participants used an evidence-based approach to develop a worldwide definition: meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD) is a chronic, diffuse abnormality of the meibomian glands, commonly characterized by terminal duct obstruction and/or qualitative/quantitative changes in the glandular secretion. This may result in alteration of the tear film, symptoms of eye irritation, clinically apparent inflammation, and ocular surface disease.

Using the same methodology, the participants developed a universal classification system — based on pathophysiology, rather than anatomical changes or the severity of disease — to meet the needs of clinicians and researchers alike. The consensus paper further proposes recommendations for diagnosing MGD and MGD-related disorders and presents a sequence of diagnostic tests to be performed in an order that will minimize the extent to which one test influences those that follow.

Also included in the report are recommendations for the evaluation and grading of the severity of MGD, management of and therapy for the disease and norms for clinical trials designed to evaluate pharmaceutical interventions for treatment.

The International Workshop on Meibomian Gland Dysfunction was conducted by the Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society (TFOS). While the breadth and depth of the consensus findings are expected to have a far-reaching impact on the clinical care of patients, the group of experts concur that additional research be conducted to further study other aspects of MGD. These include its association with dry eye disease and standardized and validated ways to identify symptoms and signs of MGD.

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The IOVS article is published in English, with complete or partial translations available in Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Turkish.

The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) is the largest eye and vision research organization in the world. Members include more than 12,500 eye and vision researchers from over 80 countries. ARVO encourages and assists research, training, publication and knowledge-sharing in vision and ophthalmology.

The ARVO peer-reviewed journal Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science (IOVS) publishes results from original hypothesis-based clinical and laboratory research studies, as well as Reviews, Perspectives, and Special Issues. IOVS 2009 Impact Factor ranks No. 4 out of 45 among ophthalmology journals. The journal is online-only and articles are published daily.

Katrina Norfleet
knorfleet@arvo.org
240-221-2924

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