Training your team: Eyecare exercise

It’s not just customers who can find the eye care category confusing, a mystery shopping report in 2014 showed that only 42% of pharmacies surveyed in the UK correctly identified dry eye. Your team may find eye conditions difficult to differentiate as symptoms can be common to different conditions. Encouraging your team to ask about triggers can help with differentiation.

As a team, role play how you would manage the following customers. Have your team/team member play their usual role, while you take the part of the customer.

Customer 1: A 44-year old man: “I’ve got gritty, watery eyes.”

Customer profile
- He has had the symptoms for a few weeks
- His eyes feel worse as the day progresses, which is annoying as he works with computers
- He has no other symptoms or conditions.

Did your team member correctly identify that the customer had dry eyes? Computer use is a common trigger for dry eye. If not, more information on eye conditions is available via a downloadable summary sheet.

What treatment was suggested?
- Allergy eye drops are ineffective for dry eye, but customers try these as they may be unaware that watery eyes are a dry eye symptom
- For dry eyes, a lubricant in the form of eye drops, ointment or spray (e.g. Optrex Actimist 2-in-1 Eye Spray) can be recommended
- Different formulations and actives can differ in how long they provide relief; e.g. products containing sodium hyaluronate (e.g. Optrex Intensive Eye Drops) provide longer lasting relief than those containing hypromellose

Was format considered?
- Eye drops can be difficult for some customers to use and an eye spray may be better
- Customers who want on-the-go relief may also find eye sprays useful. Eye ointments (e.g. Optrex Night Restore Gel Drops) are good for night-time use but can cause temporary blurring.

What lifestyle advice was offered?
Offering lifestyle advice showcases the added value pharmacy have in customer care. Tips can include:
- Taking frequent screen/book breaks and keeping their computer monitor at or below eye level, having contact lens-free days, using a humidifier to moisten the air.

Full information is available in the managing eye conditions module.

Please note that essential information can be found on page 5-6.
Customer profile

- She has had symptoms for a few days, since the warm weather started
- Symptoms improve after a while when she goes indoors
- She has no other symptoms and is not taking any other medicines.

Did your team member correctly identify that the customer had seasonal allergic conjunctivitis? If not, more information on eye conditions is available via a downloadable summary sheet.

What treatment was suggested?

- Oral or topical antihistamines or the topical mast cell stabiliser sodium cromoglicate can be recommended
- Sodium cromoglicate (e.g. Optrex Allergy 2% w/v Eye Drops) can be used alongside oral antihistamines or intranasal corticosteroid sprays if additional relief from ocular symptoms is needed
- Not all treatments can be used with contact lenses.

Did your team member consider that topical antihistamines are only available OTC in combination with topical decongestants and therefore can only be used for short periods? If not, more information on eye conditions is available via a downloadable summary sheet.

What lifestyle advice was offered?

- Avoiding rubbing eyes and wearing wrap-around sunglasses and closing windows to avoid pollen

Full information is available in the managing eye conditions module.

Was format considered?

- For customers with just ocular symptoms, a topical treatment (e.g. Optrex Allergy 2% w/v Eye Drops) may be sufficient
- Eye drops can be difficult for some customers to use and an eye spray (e.g. Optrex Actimist 2-in1 Eye Spray) may be of benefit.

Customer 2: A 27-year old woman:
“I need something for itchy, red, watery eyes.”

Please note that essential information can be found on page 5-6.
Customer 3: A 35-year-old man:
‘I’m looking for something for itchy, watery eyes.’

Customer profile
- He has had itchy, watery eyes since yesterday, but no other symptoms.
- He wears contact lenses.
- He is not taking any other medicines.

Did your team member correctly identify the need to consider a treatment that can be used with contact lenses?

What treatment was suggested?
- Phospholipid sprays (e.g. Optrex Actimist 2 in 1 for itchy and watery eyes) can provide fast relief from itchy, watery eyes.6,14
- The phospholipid liposomes repair disruption to the outer lipid layer of the tear film and make the tear film more stable.6,14

What lifestyle advice was offered?
- Avoid rubbing eyes and recommend wearing wrap-around sunglasses to reduce exposure to irritating factors.13

Full information is available in the Managing eye conditions module.

Customer 4: A 52-year-old woman:
“I’ve got watery eyes that are red and quite sore.”

Customer profile
- She has had red, watery eyes for a couple of days
- Since yesterday her eyes have been painful and sensitive to light
- She has no other symptoms, such as headache
- She is not taking any other medicines at the moment.

It is important for your team to question further when a customer complains of ‘red and sore eyes’ as painful eyes and eyes that are sensitive to light are red flag symptoms that warrant referral.15 Did your team member correctly refer to you? If not, more information on eye conditions is available via a downloadable summary sheet.

Please note that essential information can be found on page 5-6.
Customer 5: Parent of a toddler:
“He’s got horrible red, sticky eyes.”

Customer profile

• The toddler woke this morning with eyes that were stuck together
• He has no other symptoms and is not taking any other medicines.

Did your team member correctly identify infective conjunctivitis as the most likely cause of this customer’s symptoms? If not, more information on eye conditions is available via a downloadable summary sheet.

What treatment was suggested?

• Topical chloramphenicol, such as Optrex Infected Eye Drops (chloramphenicol 0.5%) or Ointment (chloramphenicol 1%), is the only chloramphenicol treatment available OTC for bacterial conjunctivitis
• It is recommended first-line in guidelines and should be used for a full five days.9

Did your team member check the age of the child? Topical chloramphenicol is only suitable for children two years and over. More information is included in the managing eye conditions module.

Was format considered?

• For customers who have easy access to a fridge, recommend chloramphenicol eye drops (e.g. Optrex Infected Eye Drops). These must be stored in the fridge and applied every two hours for the first 48 hours, which can make them difficult to use out-of-home, e.g. nursery
• For customers who do not have fridge access or prefer a simpler and less frequent dosing schedule, recommend chloramphenicol ointment (e.g. Optrex Infected Eyes Ointment). This can cause temporary blurring of vision.

What lifestyle advice was offered?

• To reduce the spread of infection, helpful advice includes washing hands regularly and avoiding sharing towels and flannels.9

Full information is included in the managing eye conditions module.

Please note that essential information can be found on page 5-6.
Essential information

OPTREX ALLERGY 2% W/V EYE DROPS. PL 35533/0033 Qualitative and quantitative composition: Each ml of eye drops contains: Active substance: 20 mg sodium cromoglicate (2.0% w/v), (one drop contains 0.7mg sodium cromoglicate). Excipient with known effect: 0.1mg benzalkonium chloride. Pharmaceutical form: Eye Drops, solution. Clear colourless to pale yellow solution.

Therapeutic indications: For the treatment of seasonal and perennial allergic conjunctivitis.

Posology and method of administration: Topical ophthalmic administration. One or two drops in each eye four times a day or as indicated by the doctor. There is no evidence to suggest that dosage alteration is required for elderly patients. Contraindications: Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients.

Special warnings and precautions for use: Do not use for more than 5 days without consulting your doctor. If you do not get better within 48 hours talk to a doctor. If your eyes get worse see a doctor straight away. After 5 days, throw away any ointment left. For external use only. Do not store above 25°C. Before using the medication for the first time, be sure that the tamper-proof seal on the bottle neck is unbroken.

OPTREX BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS 1% W/V EYE OINTMENT Qualitative and quantitative composition: Each gram of ointment contains 10 mg Chloramphenicol (1% w/w) Pharmaceutical form Eye Ointment Therapeutic indications: For the treatment of acute bacterial conjunctivitis in adults and children aged 2 years and over.

Posology and method of administration: Topical ophthalmic administration. One or two drops in each eye four times a day or as indicated by the doctor. There is no evidence to suggest that dosage alteration is required for elderly patients. Contraindications: Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients.

Special warnings and precautions for use: Do not use for more than 5 days without consulting your doctor. If you do not get better within 48 hours talk to a doctor. If your eyes get worse see a doctor straight away. After 5 days, throw away any ointment left. For external use only. Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children.

Patients should be referred to a doctor if any of the following apply: Disturbed vision. Any significant pain within the eye. Photophobia. Eye inflammation associated with a rash on the scalp or face. The eye looks cloudy. The pupil looks unusual. Suspected foreign body in the eye. Patients should also be referred to their doctor if any of the following in his/her medical history apply: Previous conjunctivitis in the recent past. Glaucoma. Dry eye syndrome. Eye surgery or laser treatment in the last 6 months. Eye injury. Current use of other eye drops or eye ointment.

If you use contact lenses, seek advice either from your optometrist, contact lens practitioner or doctor before you use this product. You should not wear your contact lenses during the course of treatment. If you wear soft contact lenses do not start wearing them for at least 24 hours after you have finished using the eye ointment.

Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction. Bone marrow depressant drugs. Pregnancy and lactation. Adverse events should also be reported to Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare (UK) Ltd on: 0333 200 5345

Healthcare Ltd, PO14 4PJ, UK

Last revision of SmPC: 09/02/2016

SmPC: 09/02/2016

MRRP: £5.99. For full information refer to: https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/314045
conjunctivitis and in cases where infection is not confined to the conjunctivae, the topical use of chloramphenicol should be supplemented by appropriate systemic treatment. Therefore, the patient should be referred to seek medical advice. The use of topical chloramphenicol may occasionally result in overgrowth of non-susceptible organisms including fungi. If any new infection appears during treatment, the patient should be referred to the doctor. Prolonged or frequent intermittent topical application of chloramphenicol should be avoided since it may increase the likelihood of sensitisation and emergence of resistant organisms. Do not use for more than 5 days without consulting your doctor. The label will state: If symptoms do not improve within 48 hours talk to your doctor. Seek further immediate medical advice at any time if symptoms worsen. Do not use if you are allergic to chloramphenicol or any of the ingredients. Discard any remaining eye drops after the five day course of treatment For external use only. Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children. Phenylmercuric nitrate is irritant to the skin. Topical application to eyes has been associated with mercurialentis and atypical band keratopathy. Patients should be referred to a doctor if any of the following apply: Disturbed vision. Severe pain within the eye. Photophobia. Eye inflammation associated with a rash on the scalp or face. The eye looks cloudy. The pupil looks unusual. Suspected foreign body in the eye. Patients should also be referred to their doctor if any of the following in his/her medical history apply: Previous conjunctivitis in the recent past. Glaucoma. Dry eye syndrome. Eye surgery or laser treatment in the last 6 months. Eye injury. Current use of other eye drops or eye ointment. Contact lens use If this product is used following advice from a contact lens practitioner or doctor contact lenses should not be worn during the course of treatment. Soft contact lenses should not be replaced for 24 hours after completing the treatment. Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction: Bone marrow depressant drugs. Pregnancy and lactation: The safety of chloramphenicol eye drops during pregnancy and lactation has not been established. As this product is for sale without prescription it is not recommended for use during pregnancy. In view of the fact that chloramphenicol may appear in breast milk, use of the product during lactation should be avoided. Effects on ability to drive and use machines: Blurring of vision can occur with the drops and patients should be warned not to drive or operate machinery unless their vision is clear. Undesirable effects: Transient burning or stinging sensations may occur with the use of chloramphenicol eye drops. Serious side effects include hypersensitivity reactions that may manifest as angioneurotic oedema, anaphylaxis, urticaria, fever, and vesicular and maculopapular dermatitis. Treatment must be discontinued immediately in such cases. Bone marrow depression, including the idiosyncratic type of irreversible and fatal aplastic anaemia that is recognised to occur with systemic therapy, has been reported in association with topical administration of chloramphenicol. Overdose: In view of the relatively small amount of chloramphenicol in chloramphenicol eye drops, overdosage with this product is unlikely to constitute a hazard. No specific treatment would be required. List of Excipients: Borax powder. Boric acid powder. Phenylmercuric nitrate. Purified Water. Incompatibilities: Not applicable. Shelf life: 18 months unopened. Although the shelf life once opened is 28 days, patients should be advised to discard the medicine after a 5 day course of treatment. Special precautions for storage: Store at 2° to 8°C. Protect from light. Legal classification: P Licence holder: Optrex Limited. 103-105 Bath Road. Slough. SL1 3UH. UK. Date of revision of the text: 23 June 2015. MRRP: £5.99. For full information refer to: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/612

Adverse events should be reported. Reporting forms and information can be found at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. Adverse events should also be reported to Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare (UK) ltd on: 0333 200 5345