

# Sclearal Lens Curricula in Optometric Education

Ellen S. Shorter<sup>1</sup>, Cherie B. Nau<sup>2</sup>, Amy C. Nau<sup>3</sup>, Jennifer S. Fogt<sup>4</sup>, Muriel M. Schornack<sup>2</sup> and Jennifer S. Harthan<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, <sup>2</sup>Mayo Clinic, <sup>3</sup>Korb & Associates, <sup>4</sup>Ohio State University College of Optometry, <sup>5</sup>Illinois College of Optometry

## INTRODUCTION

As scleral lenses have become more widely available, schools of optometry have incorporated scleral lens education prescription and management into their contact lens curricula.

The purpose of this study is to describe characteristics of scleral lens education in optometric education.

## METHODS

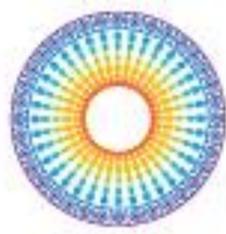
Contact lens educators (members of the AOCLE Association of Optometric Contact Lens Educators) were invited to complete an electronic REDCap survey regarding scleral lens curricula at their schools. The survey was available from 6/2019 – 8/2019. Data was summarized using descriptive statistics. This project was approved by the University of Illinois at Chicago IRB.

## RESULTS

192 email invitations were sent to members of the AOCLE and 61 individuals completed the survey. Of those, 53 reported being actively involved in scleral lens education at their institution.

Educators reported:

- 9.8 [10.9] years (mean [SD]) experience fitting scleral lenses
- 8.6 [8.5] years teaching scleral lens prescription and management
- Personally completing 23.7 [35.1] clinical scleral lens evaluations/month



Illinois Eye  
ILLINOIS EYE AND EAR INFIRMARY



THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
CHICAGO PEORIA ROCKFORD URBANA

SCOPE  
Scleral Lenses in Current  
Ophthalmic Practice Evaluation

# Optometric Educators

# allot 15% of their

# contact lens curriculum to

# Scleral Lenses

# utilizing 1/3 of their

# available fitting sets.

SUPPORT



YEAR SCLERAL LENS EDUCATION BEGINS

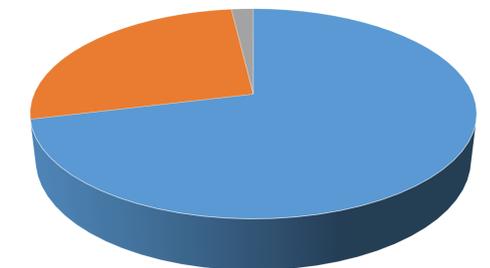


Figure 1. Scleral lens education begins in 3<sup>rd</sup> year for most (71.2%) followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> year (26.9%). Only a few report education beginning in 4<sup>th</sup> year (1.9%) (n=52).

CONTACT LENS CURRICULUM

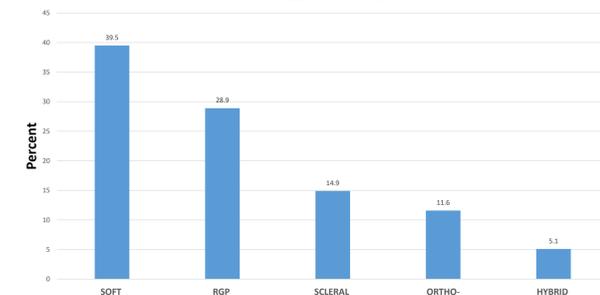


Figure 2. The majority of contact lens curriculum is reported to be soft lenses, followed by RGP lenses. Scleral lenses curriculum makes up 14.9% of contact lens education (n=47).

### Educational Sources

Educators rank in-person continuing education (CE) as the most important source of scleral lens info (61%), while 22% consider laboratory consultants most important. Textbooks were the least important source by a majority of respondents (56%) (n=36).

### Scleral Lens Fitting Sets

Respondents reported having access to 11.5 [2.2] scleral lens fitting sets in their school clinics (n=38). However, they reported using only 3.8 [2.2] fitting sets at least once per month (n=37).

## CONCLUSIONS

- Contact lens educators at colleges of optometry report nearly a decade of experience fitting scleral lenses and rely heavily upon in-person CE to stay current in the field.
- Education on scleral lenses is generally introduced during the 3rd year of most optometry schools curricula.
- Scleral lens education comprises ~15% of the total contact lens curriculum.
- Although educators report having access to over ten scleral lens fitting sets, most actively use about a third of their available sets.