The Influence of Soft Contact Lens Materials on the Central, Para-Central and Peripheral Corneal Endothelium

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The influence of soft contact lens materials on the central, para-central and peripheral corneal endothelium

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: To examine the influence of a variety of soft contact lenses (SCL) materials on the corneal endothelium, prior to and following two weeks of cessation of SCL wear.

METHODS: Corneal endothelial cells were examined using a CEM-530 specular microscope (Nidek, Japan). Full-time SCL wearers (n = 31 eyes) were compared to a non-contact lens (NCL) control group (n = 28 eyes) of a similar age (SCC 20.62 ± 1.69 years, NCL: 21.4 ± 2.45 years, p = 0.58). Parameters analyzed were endothelial cell density (ECD; cells/mm²), mean cell area (MCA; µm²), coefficient of variation (CVV) and hexagonality (%).

RESULTS: Prior to SCL cessation, two-way ANOVA testing showed significant differences between silicone hydrogel (SH) SCL materials for the COV at 1º, with generation 2 Si (G2SiH) wearers showing increased COV (27.67 ± 3.78) compared to generation 3 SiH (G3SH) wearers (24.50 ± 3.73; p = 0.01). COV at the superior periphery was significantly lower in the NCL group (25.63 ± 2.79) compared to the hydrogel group (29.62 ± 6.22; p = 0.03). The MCA in the inferior periphery was also significantly higher in the NCL group (346.92 ± 66.75) compared to the hydrogel group (314.62 ± 16.57; p = 0.02).

Following 14 days SCL cessation, no statistically significant differences in stability of endothelial parameters were detected between NCL and SCL material groups (all p values > 0.05).

CONCLUSION: SCL wear has an effect on para-central and peripheral corneal endothelial measurements in SCL wearers compared to NCL wearers; with smallest significant differences seen between NCL and hydrogel SCL wearers. Following two weeks SCL cessation, there were no significant differences in the stability of all endothelial measurements, regardless of which SCL material was worn.

METHODS

Inclusion criteria:
- Myopic prescriptions with less astigmatism (≤ -2.00 DC)
- No systemic or ocular disease
- SCL group: Full-time SCL wear (> 5 days per week for at least one year)
- NCL group: no history of CL wear in the year prior to enrollment.

Data collection:
- Visits: baseline (SCL group: immediately following SCL removal), followed by SCL cessation days 1, 7, 14. NCL control subjects were asked to attend the clinic at the same time intervals.
- Apointments were scheduled at the same time of day (±3 hours) to limit the possible influence of diurnal variation.
- Endothelial specular microscopy: 7 areas of the endothelium were analyzed centrally, para-centrally (0.6mm from centre) at 0º, 90º, 180º, 270º and the superior and inferior periphery (3.7mm from centre) (Figure 1 and 2).

RESULTS

- Two-way ANOVA testing demonstrated no significant effect of SCL material on central endothelial parameters of ECD (p = 0.36), CVV (p = 0.20), hexagonality (p = 0.44) or MCA (p = 0.88) (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6).

CONCLUSIONS

- The various SCL materials examined do not have a significant effect on the central endothelial parameters compared to the NCL control group. However, SCL wear had a significant effect on peripheral corneal endothelial measurements in SCL wearers compared to NCL wearers, with the largest significant differences seen between NCL and hydrogel SCL groups.

- Results of this study are in agreement with those of Amann et al. (2003) who found increased peripheral ECD in SCL wearers compared to NCL wearers. Amann et al. presented this was due to a redistribution of endothelial cells towards the periphery in SCL wear. However, we found a significantly reduced MCA in SCL wearers compared to NCL wearers. This reduced MCA would also account for the higher density of cells in the periphery.

- Following two weeks SCL cessation, there was no significant differences in the stability of all endothelial measurements, regardless of which SCL material was worn prior to SCL cessation.

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