

**EYEGLOSS USAGE, MAINTENANCE HABITS, AND AWARENESS OF BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION: A SURVEY-BASED STUDY IN SRI LANKA**

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Potential eye infections resulting from unhygienic eyeglass usage practices and a lack of awareness are critical factors to consider. This study aimed to investigate eyeglass usage, maintenance, and awareness of bacterial contamination among eyeglass wearers in Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional online survey was carried out from May to June 2024, and participants included aged 18 years and older. The questionnaire covered demographic information, types of eyeglasses and usages, cleaning habits, awareness of bacterial infections, health issues, and knowledge of antibacterial products. The demographic profile of 322 respondents revealed a predominantly young cohort aged 18 to 35 years (53%) with a university-level education (61%). Prescription glasses were the most popular type of eyewear (73%), followed by sunglasses (24%), computer glasses (20%), and safety glasses (12%). Usage frequency varied, with 34% wearing glasses constantly, 52% as needed, and 14% rarely. For cleaning, 63% of respondents use microfiber cloths, 38% use water and soap, and 11% use commercial alcoholic products. The results may be mutually inclusive, as respondents could use multiple types of eyewear and cleaning methods. A significant association was found between gender and the impact of hygienic habits on preventing bacterial contamination on eyeglasses ( $\chi^2 = 5.956, p = 0.020$ ). Most respondents (63%) were aware of bacterial contamination on eyeglasses, and the primary sources of contamination were environmental exposure (66%) and manual contact (63%). Sixty-one percent of respondents knew unclean eyeglasses could cause eye infections, and 38% used antibacterial products. A significant association was reported between good hygiene practices and the level of discomfort in wearing eyeglasses ( $\chi^2 = 14.03, p = 0.001$ ). For eyeglass hygiene and eye health information, 63% of respondents rely on the internet, while 54% consult with eye care professionals. The importance of public health campaigns on eyeglass hygiene is emphasized by 65% of respondents, suggesting the need for greater awareness and education on effective eyeglass maintenance.

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