In-practice experience with the Idra ocular surface analyzer

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I have used the Idra in my practice for the last two years. The instrument is being used in regular eye exams to evaluate tear film quality. A more comprehensive analysis is offered whenever a patient complains about episodic uncomfortable eyes, episodic blurred vision, or has more specific complaints such as sandiness, grittiness, burning or watery eyes.

There are two main types of dry eye; Aqueous deficient (ADDE) and Evaporative (EDE), however a mix of these two causes of dry eye is often found. The Idra instrument helps us to take objective measurements to determine the probable cause, and thereby also helps to give the best possible treatment and advice to our patients.

The instrument can measure many important aspects of dry eye, such as tear volume, tear film stability (by measuring how long the tear film remains stable before it bursts), tear film quality (by measuring the amount of lipid in the outermost layer of the film), and blink frequency and quality. Patients are amazed when they see the video and photos captured by the Idra, and they understand how we evaluate tear quantity and quality, and how it relates to their symptoms.

It can also document the status of lid health, by visualizing the lipid glands using infra-red photography. This technique is called Meibography. Many patients with dry eye symptoms suffer from gland loss. Being able to measure the level of gland loss, helps us to decide upon a treatment strategy, and also to warn or to avoid treating some patients who may not benefit.

As an optometrist, I value objective measurements. Key measurements are repeated on follow-up visits, to check that our treatment strategy works, and that the patients condition improves.
This also drives patient compliance to our advice and decisions.

I also use the Idra to measure how a contact lens “performs” in the patient’s eye, and how it relates to comfortable wearing time. Measuring the stability and quality of the tearfilm, and being able to visualize this to the patient, is a powerful tool that both educates the patient, and helps to sell, premium contact lenses.

The Idra Ocular surface analyzer is a powerful tool to diagnose, and to measure the severity of dry eye. It is also is very impressive to patients, and helps to build both understanding and compliance.

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