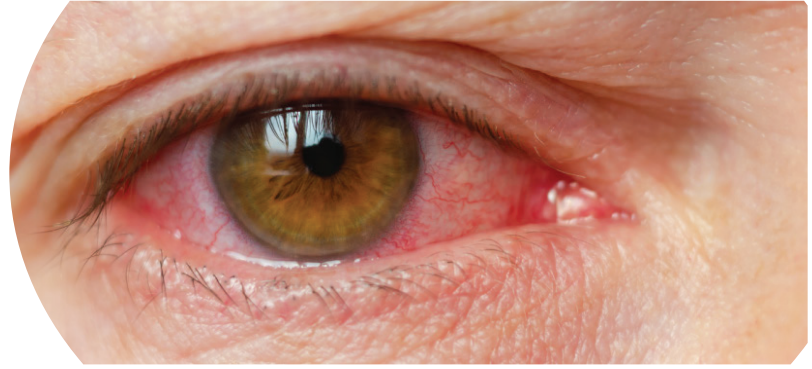


10 March 2024



“If preservative damages the eye so much, why don’t we just make the preservative-free ones available?” - Wendy

Something is bothering me. Something unfair. **I need your help.**

Over the past three years, I’ve heard many harrowing stories. Stories of the harsh impact a glaucoma diagnosis has on lives of patients and their families.

I just read the story about Wendy’s father Jasper in your enclosed newsletter, Eyelights. And **I now have a new appreciation for what a gift to research could really achieve.** Research gives a new understanding of glaucoma. It gives new treatments and hope for a cure.

I started to think about the true impact of glaucoma. Is there something we can do to significantly change outcomes for people like Jasper? He lost years of living a good quality of life. “Misery and suffering” as Wendy puts it. Not to mention the financial burden of care.

Although a complex case, Jasper had an adverse reaction to the preservative in his glaucoma eye drops. **And if he had access to preservative-free drops, it would have changed his and his family’s life.** This is something you and I can help with.

I feel truly grateful. Last year, the community provided the funds to conduct lab research here in New Zealand. The results showed how benzalkonium chloride (BAK), a preservative in many glaucoma drops, causes inflammation of retinal cells. The BAK-free eyedrops had a more protective impact in comparison.

If you haven’t heard of BAK, you can find it in household cleaners. And it’s in your eye drops.

You are not alone in thinking about what on earth we are doing, putting damaging chemicals like BAK in our eyes. Can you believe that New Zealanders don’t have much choice? Preservative-free drops are not yet freely available in New Zealand, but they are in other countries.

Thanks to people like you, the lab research I mentioned above was completed. It’s the first vital step toward better treatments and quality of life for people with glaucoma. And we need

please turn over

to keep moving.

Please take time to read Wendy and Jasper's story. Wendy is rightfully concerned about how much money the New Zealand Health System has spent as a result of damage caused by preservatives. And whether this could be better invested caring for people who have no alternatives to manage their disease.

Preservative-free glaucoma drops are not yet funded in New Zealand. This means you have limited access to potentially safer alternatives. The team and I here at Glaucoma New Zealand are driven to support you and members like you. We want to create a different future. One where there is choice.

This is why we won't sit still on this issue and ask for your support.

I hope you'll consider helping us take the next vital step towards understanding the damage caused by preservatives in eye drops. With your support we can proceed with a clinical trial this year.

A donation of anything that you can afford will enable that trial to take place. It'll put us in the best position to advocate for an important change in clinical eye care.

The implications this trial has for eye care policy in New Zealand cannot be understated. The evidence would create a strong base for Glaucoma New Zealand to approach Pharmac. It would let us advocate for funding of preservative-free glaucoma drops for you and for people like Jasper.

Your gift today would be truly life-changing. You would be helping to improve access to safer alternatives for glaucoma patients. You would be contributing to better long-term ocular health outcomes.

I need you and all members of Glaucoma New Zealand to get behind this clinical trial now. You can make it happen. When the trial is done, we will be one step closer to providing New Zealanders with glaucoma drops that are free of the nasty preservative BAK.

Help make it fairer for New Zealanders with glaucoma. Help reduce unnecessary pain. Help advance New Zealanders' eye-health. I'd be very grateful for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Martin
General Manager



P.S., The end of the tax year is fast approaching – remember if you donate before 31 March, you will be eligible for a 33% donation tax credit. Your gift would fund a vital clinical trial. You would help kiwis to have affordable and fair access to preservative-free glaucoma drops.