



Federaal Kenniscentrum voor de Gezondheidszorg
Centre Fédéral d'Expertise des Soins de Santé
Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre

Correction of refractive errors of the eye part 1: perceptions and experiences

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Request from

- the Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health,
- the Federal Public Service (Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment),
- the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (INAMI – RIZIV) and
- a sickness fund

→ Two reports:

PART 1: survey on refractive errors

PART 2: HTA of refractive eye surgery techniques

In collaboration with

- Ipsos (Interviews)
- GFK Significant (Telephone survey)

Study objectives

- Analyse the reported frequency of refractive errors
- Describe how refractive errors and correction methods are perceived and experienced

Methods

- Telephone survey
- Quota sample Belgian population (N=4324)
- Face-to-face interviews
- Purposive sample (N=36)

Results – reported prevalence

- **7/10 respondents report a refractive error**
 - Myopia (38.4%)
 - Hyperopia (8.9%)
 - Presbyopia (35.3%)
 - Astigmatism (10.8%)
- **2/3 respondents use a correction method**
 - Glasses (95.7%)
 - Contact lenses (13.6%)
 - Refractive eye surgery (2.6%)
- **1/20 respondents report a refractive error but no use of correction method**

Results – Limited knowledge

- **Almost 1/2 respondents did not know their diopter**
- **Inconsistent data: e.g. impossible combinations such as myopia and hyperopia.**

Results: Satisfaction

- **Almost all respondents are satisfied with their correction method**
 - **comfort is the main perceived advantage.**

Results: consulting for eye sight problems

- **7/10 respondents ever consulted an ophthalmologist, 4/10 an optician**
- **1/20 respondents with refractive error never consulted an ophthalmologist, or optician.**
 - **‘No need for it’**
 - **However 2/3 within this group wears glasses**



Results – Costs

- **Glasses**

- Cost depends on severity of refractive error and type of glasses
- ½ respondents paid more than 300€
- Renewal term: 1-5 years

- **Contact lenses**

- Cost depends on lens type
- Day lenses: yearly cost up to 950€ (> estimation of opticians)

- **Refractive eye surgery**

- Cost between 2000 and 3000€ for two eyes
- Cost saving in the long run

Results – Reimbursement

- **Glasses and contactlenses**
 - Should be accessible for all
 - Reimbursement desirable taking into account severity of the refractive error
- **Refractive eye surgery**
 - More willing to pay more taxes
 - But generally perceived as luxury surgery (availability of alternatives)

Recommendations (I)

- **To the clinicians and sickness funds:**
 - The patients with refractive error need clear **information** on the different correction methods and their reimbursement;
 - The patients who consider refractive surgery need to receive **tailored information** on the appropriate techniques, in particular the expected outcomes (e.g. the risk of persistent need for glasses after the intervention), safety aspects and the cost.

Recommendations (II)

- **To the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance:**
 - Before considering a possible change of the reimbursement criteria for the correction methods, one should further explore the **societal base** in relation to the level of severity to be considered, to the amount and to the frequency of reimbursement.

This question could be the topic of an approach to poll the societal values, as envisaged within the project 'Citizens and patients participation'.

Erratum

■ **Synthesis point 3.3., bullet point 2**

“In presbyopia the original lens is removed as in a cataract operation and replaced by a synthetic lens.”

Will be replace by:

“Another method of intraocular refractive surgery consists of the removal of the original lens, as done for the treatment of cataract, and its replacement by an artificial lens.”



Colophon

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Colophon

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