

A round-up of the eye-related hot topics that have been trending on social media over the last few weeks.

### #ChrisMcCausland #KeepDancing

I wrote in my last article about how overjoyed I was to hear Chris McCausland was joining the *Strictly Come Dancing* lineup this year as the show's first blind contestant, how it was great to see representation of people with vision loss on the screen. And oh my goodness Chris has surpassed my wildest dreams. He has been incredible each week and, alongside his extremely talented dance partner, Dianne Buswell, has captivated, inspired and emotionally moved viewers across the country, me included! Right from the first week, fans have tipped him as a possible winner [1]. With each passing week he is the constant I most look forward to. Even if he does not lift the glitterball trophy, he has firmly cemented himself as a viewer's favourite. I hope that his presence on the show inspires people across the country to not be restrained by any perceived limit.

### #Injury #Golf

When I think of golfing, I think of relaxed strolls along stunning courses, but a recently trending story has shown that this is not always the case. Australian golfer Jeffrey Guan was hit in the face by an errant ball while playing in a pro-am tournament in California, only one week after his exciting debut on a PGA tour [2]. Jeffrey is a two-time national junior champion and has only been a pro for a year prior to this tournament. He described turning towards his cart to put his club away when he was struck by the golf ball, making him drop to the ground in pain. He subsequently required multiple surgeries for injuries to his left eye and orbit, with a two-week stay in intensive care. Sadly, this has left him with permanent sight loss in the left eye. It has been described as a freak accident, but it is still a scary prospect to have such a life-changing injury come from nowhere. I cannot imagine how tough it would be to

go through this, especially for someone so young, just starting on their professional golfing career. Jeffrey has said he will continue to strive to be a professional golfer, to work hard and achieve his dream. I will be following his career with avid interest.

### #VisionLoss #TheVoice #RocketMan

Two singers have made headlines recently with stories of their experience with vision loss. The most recent series of *The Voice* had contestant Kyra Smith competing up to the semifinals [3]. The twenty-year-old student had an extraordinary journey to the show, being in a wheelchair on account of suffering from postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome. She had to learn how to sing sitting down and manage her heart rate to prevent triggering symptoms, but while delivering a particularly powerful section of her semifinal performance, she actually lost her vision for a short period of time. In an impressive act of showmanship, she pushed through and completed the song, but sadly did not make it through to the finals. Also in the news, Elton John has opened up about having limited vision in one eye following an eye infection [4]. He did not disclose what the infection was, but that it had been severe and that recovery has been an extremely slow process. He revealed that he has been focusing on rest and recovery for the past few months, which is well earned for someone who has literally spent decades being a worldclass performer.

### #EyeballTransplant

A little over a year ago, Aaron James accidentally touched a live electrical wire and lost large parts of the left half of his face, including his left eye. He underwent a world-first operation, involving 140 doctors and taking 21 hours, to receive a new eyeball and face from an anonymous donor. Now, Aaron is making headlines again with a one-year update [5]. To cut straight to the good news, he is doing really well! In fact, he is far exceeding the initial expectations of his transplant team. The eye transplant was a particular marvel. Once the eye was removed from the donor, the operating surgeons aimed to reattach it to Aaron as quickly as possible, reconnecting each nerve and blood vessel with diligence. Donor stem cells were also used around the optic nerve to encourage growth. In the year since the surgery the eye has maintained its blood flow and has not become shrivelled or rejected, as was feared might be the

case. He cannot see out of the transplanted eye, but his medical team are not ruling out what might be possible in the future. Watch this space for the five- and ten-year updates!

### #Parasites #Cornea

A tale as old as time in corneal clinics, twenty-three-year-old Brooklyn McCasland developed eye pain and vision loss after swimming in the sea with her contact lenses in [6]. Unfortunately, she was found to have *acanthamoeba keratitis*, which has left her with permanent vision loss in the affected eye. While this narrative won't be anything new to our corneal colleagues, it is crucial that these stories are reported in mainstream media outlets to highlight the importance of the advice we give to our patients. People need to see the real-life consequences that can come about from improper contact lens wear. I find it useful to reference recent articles when talking to patients about these dangers in clinic, to contextualise what I am saying and enforce the reality of these risks. Even if this makes just one person decide not to swim in their contact lenses, that is a win in my books.

#### References

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-13877587/Strictly-viewers-praise-Chris-McCausland.html>
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/australian-golfer-jeffrey-guan-loses-sight-in-one-eye-after-freak-playing-accident-13245599>
3. <https://metro.co.uk/2024/10/19/voice-uk-contestant-lost-vision-singing-hard-semi-final-21819170/>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/article/2024/sep/03/elton-john-left-with-limited-vision-after-eye-infection>
5. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-13829635/Arkansas-world-eyeball-face-transplant-Aaron-James-wife.html>
6. <https://metro.co.uk/2024/10/26/woman-goes-blind-contact-lens-mistake-meant-parasites-burrowed-eye-21870620/>

[All links last accessed November 2024]

**“I find it useful to reference recent articles when talking to patients about [improper lens wear] in clinic, to contextualise what I am saying and enforce the reality of these risks”**

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