

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

#ContactLens #Trapped

I started wearing contact lenses in my teenage years and was always worried about them slipping behind my eyes. Thankfully, I now know that they can't do that, but it still sends a shiver down my spine when I read stories of lenses gathered under the eyelids. Recently hitting the headlines, a woman in China was found to have five contact lenses trapped in the upper fornix of her left eye [1]. They were only found when she was receiving treatment from a plastic surgery team for hemifacial atrophy, who found them as they were carrying out an autologous fat graft. Surprisingly, the patient was completely asymptomatic from an ophthalmic point of view.

#Eyes #Teeth #Trauma

I expect to write about eyes in this section, but found myself drawn to two remarkable stories that have been trending, which also involve teeth. A man in Mexico City was involved in a road traffic accident and the force of hitting his airbag caused multiple facial injuries [2]. Most strikingly of these, he suffered a penetrating trauma to his left eye from his own tooth! It had come loose during the collision and an unfortunate twist of fate led a fragment into his eye. It was successfully removed by the ophthalmology team eight days after the injury, though his vision remains reduced. Now, while that was a story of a tooth accidentally being in the eye, how about one where a tooth is purposefully put there. The first steps of Canada's first-ever osteo-odonto keratoprosthesis procedure has been carried out, with ophthalmologists using a patient's own tooth to create a support structure for an artificial cornea [3]. The tooth is initially shaved into a rectangle and a plastic lens is fitted through the middle, before being implanted into the patient's cheek for three months, then eventually the eye. The patient in this instance suffers with corneal scarring secondary to Stevens-Johnson syndrome, receiving the treatment as part of a pilot program in Vancouver. His surgical team hope that this will pave the way to them becoming the only active centre in America's north to offer the operation. I must admit, it is not something I was aware of before reading the story, but will look out for further developments with great interest.

#Pioneers #SightSavers

Speaking of new procedures, the successful outcomes from the removal

of a previously-thought-inoperable meningioma in the cavernous sinus has hit the headlines [4]. An endoscopic-trans-orbital approach was taken, the first of its kind in the UK. The operating team had practised in the build-up to the surgery using 3D models of the patient's head and the cadaver lab. The surgery has now been performed multiple times and offers a new strategy to managing these types of tumours that may not have been operated on in the past. On the topic of ground-breaking treatments, specialists in Moorfields and Great Ormond Street Hospitals have pioneered a world-first gene therapy treatment for the management of Leber congenital amaurosis [5]. Children were selected from different countries across the world and had a healthy copy of the defective gene injected into the retina. The researchers have been impressed with the progress made by the children treated and indicate a potential shift in the approach to managing these patients.

#Art #GiantEyeball #Exhibitions

If, like me, you have always wanted to poke around inside a giant eyeball, then your dreams may just come true. In Manchester's Science and Industry Museum, a new exhibition from the team behind the BBC kid's show *Operation Ouch!* allows you to journey through all the senses of the head [6]. There are various interactive activities for the family to get involved in, but I was particularly taken aback by the large eye that can be ventured inside of. I promise not to shove too many kids out of the way as I make my way there. Though this isn't the only exhibition I would be keen to check out. In London, Bianca Rafaella has her first solo show, entitled *Faint Memories* [7]. She is the first registered blind student to get a degree in visual arts from Kingston University and hopes that her work will shed light on her experiences as a visually impaired artist. With the exhibition set to explore themes of memory, perception and fragility, it is one not to be missed.

#AI

Stories on artificial intelligence (AI) are all over the news. From investments to tech, there are new developments every day and ophthalmology is not immune to it. An AI voice system called Dora has been used in the south of England as a point of contact for patients to call and ask their questions following cataract surgery [8].

The system triages who needs further assessment and has received excellent feedback from patients, as well as freeing up time for nursing staff to focus on surgical duties while Dora took care of phone calls and administrative duties. While in Scotland, AI software is being trialled to allow high-street opticians to find early signs of dementia on retinal photographs [9]. Using the world's largest dataset of retinal photos from opticians across Scotland, the AI system has developed an algorithm to predict neurodegenerative diseases based on the appearance of the retinal blood vessels. Hopefully, an earlier diagnosis will allow patients to be better prepared for whatever the future holds. Technological advancements never cease to amaze me and I am forever excited to read up on the next big thing. I don't know what will be available to us in 10 or 20 years, but I can't wait to find out.

References

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