



What is your KC IQ?

In order to create a successful treatment plan, individuals with KC and their doctors must be able to communicate. A 2018 article in the medical journal *Cornea* observed "patients with keratoconus may feel they are not receiving attention and care to the level they feel the severity of their condition requires".

Patients complain their eye doctors do not fully explain their condition or hear their concerns. Eyecare professionals maintain they describe the risk factors, symptoms and treatment options, and answer patient questions.

Is anyone listening?

Last year, Swiss eye doctors were interested to learn how much their patients with keratoconus knew about the condition. They constructed a six-question survey and what they considered appropriate answers that displayed a minimal disease knowledge. Rather than a multiple-choice test, study subjects were interviewed and had the opportunity to give as elaborate or simple an answer as they chose. In total, researchers were looking for 21 'correct' answers to the six questions based on specific key words.

[Click here](#) for the questions and answers.

The survey was given to 167 patients, with a mean age of 39, at five different eye clinics. In addition to answering the KC-related questions, interviewers collected information about the subjects' education, severity of disease, and health experience.

The authors were surprised to find that not one of the participants scored 100%. Average score was 35%, and the range was from 0–76%. Severity of disease and the number of years that the patient had lived with KC did not affect results. Educational level did not make a difference either. Participants with a medical or paramedical background scored no better than those who did not. They concluded there is a mismatch between what patients know about their condition and what their caregivers assume they know.

The lower than expected scores could be the result of a poorly designed survey, or perhaps some of the information that the doctors thought was essential to know was not considered important by individuals living with the condition. A patient-constructed survey would likely have different questions and answers in determining minimal keratoconus knowledge. The results of this research are interesting because they are another example of the communication gap that can exist between eyecare professionals and their patients with keratoconus.

Reference: *Do Patients With Keratoconus Have Minimal Disease Knowledge?* Baenninger PA et al, *Cornea*, Sept. 2020, [epub ahead of print](#).