

# SAFEGUARDING VISION: THE IMPERATIVE ROLE OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN OPHTHALMIC PATIENT CARE

**Sana Aslam<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Shaheer<sup>2</sup>**

In the realm of healthcare, few facets demand as stringent attention to detail as ophthalmic patient care. The fragility of vision and the complexity of eye-related procedures underscore the critical importance of maintaining infection prevention and control (IPC) practices within this specialized field. The commitment to these measures is not merely a preference; it's an ethical imperative and a cornerstone of responsible healthcare delivery.

Ophthalmic care, ranging from routine examinations to intricate surgeries, demands a heightened level of vigilance and adherence to stringent IPC protocols. Studies<sup>1,2</sup> have underscored the potential risks associated with lapses in infection control, highlighting the dire consequences that infections can inflict upon ocular health, sometimes leading to irreversible vision impairment.

The bedrock of infection prevention in ophthalmology commences with meticulous adherence to hygiene protocols among healthcare personnel. This includes stringent hand hygiene practices and the meticulous disinfection and sterilization of equipment and instruments used during ocular examinations and surgeries.<sup>3,4</sup> Any oversight in this regard can potentially expose patients to sight-threatening infections.

Patient education forms another vital facet of IPC in ophthalmic care. Empowering patients with knowledge about proper eye hygiene, compliance with post-operative care, and the significance of prescribed medications fosters a collaborative effort in preventing infections.<sup>5</sup> In addition to this, the continuous education and training for healthcare professionals, coupled with routine assessments to ensure compliance, are essential components of upholding these standards.<sup>6,7</sup>

In conclusion, the role of IPC practices in ophthalmic patient care cannot be overstated. It is a commitment to ensure that the gift of sight remains unblemished by preventable infections. As healthcare professionals, it is our collective responsibility to prioritize and uphold the highest standards of infection prevention and control in ophthalmic settings.

## References:

1. Speaker, M., & Menikoff, J. Prophylaxis of endophthalmitis with topical povidone-iodine. *Ophthalmology*. 1991;98(12):1769-1775.
2. Taban, M., Behrens, A., Newcomb, R. L., et al. Acute endophthalmitis following cataract surgery: a

systematic review of the literature. *Arch Ophthalmol.* 2005;123(5):613-620.

3. American Academy of Ophthalmology. (2020). Ophthalmic Operating Room Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.aao.org/headline/ophthalmic-operating-room-guidance-during-covid-19>.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021). Contact Lens Health Week. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses/index.ht>.
5. World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). Infection prevention and control during health care when novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection is suspected: Interim guidance. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/10665-3314>.
6. Wong, T. Y., & Wong, T. Y. Ophthalmology and the COVID-19 pandemic: a key opinion leaders' perspective. *Ophthalmology.* 2016;127(5):667-671.
7. Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO). (2021). Infection Control in the Eye Care Practice. Retrieved from <https://www.jcahpo.org/education/infection-control-in-the-eye-care-practice>.