



Press Releases 2010

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November 2010

Alex agrees with US study that short-sighted children do better with lenses

A Sheffield optician has welcomed the results of an American study that concludes that short-sighted children do better with contact lenses than glasses.

The Adolescent and Child Health Initiative to Encourage Vision Empowerment (ACHIEVE) Study was undertaken by the Ohio State University College of Optometry and is the largest randomized trial of its kind. Conducted amongst 484 children over a three year period, it concluded that myopic children younger than 12 years of age report better vision-related quality of life when they are fitted with contact lenses than when they wear glasses.

Commenting on the findings, Alex Gage, who owns independent practices in Woodseats and Broomhill, said; "This is really encouraging news. Several studies have shown that children under 12 are capable of wearing and caring for contact lenses, but the benefits have never been quantified. Based on my own experience, those children who choose to wear contact lenses benefit from an improved vision-related quality of life in terms of vision correction, appearance and ease of use when doing sport, but it's reassuring to have it validated by an independent study of this magnitude." Alex continued; "Some parents don't consider contact lenses for their children. Others think they are too young or ask how old they have to be. I answer it is not a number, but how sensible or mature they are. They have to want to wear lenses, be able to look after them lenses and be responsible."

To find out whether contact lenses are suitable for your child, simply make an appointment at 857 Chesterfield Road, Woodseats by calling 0114 274 8582 or 4 Crookes Road, Broomhill on 0114 266 7066.

November 2010

Sheffield optometrist issues firework safety warning

Don't be blind to the dangers of bonfire night - follow the SPARKLER firework code!

Independent Sheffield Alex Gage optometrist today warned of the dangers of fireworks as he teamed up with national sight charity, the Eyecare Trust to promote a safety code designed to prevent avoidable eye injuries on bonfire night. Every year 10 people in the UK lose their sight and 300 people suffer serious eye injuries as a result of accidents caused by fireworks. And, it's not just children larking about that are at risk – three quarters (73%) of serious ocular traumas are sustained by adults and most (45%) occur at private parties (1,2).

Rockets take first place in the danger stakes accounting for more than a third (36%) of all serious eye injuries, but also flying high on the dangerous firework list is the innocent sparkler. Although sparklers are often thought to be one of the safest fireworks, they burn at temperatures up to 2000oC – hot enough to melt gold.

Alex, who owns the Alex Gage practices in Woodseats and Broomhill, urges people to follow the **Eyecare Trust's SPARKLER** code for a safe and injury free Bonfire Night:

Shield your eyes with protective eyewear when lighting fireworks

Plunge sparklers into a bucket of cold water as soon as they have burnt out

Attend organised displays wherever possible

Read the instructions on the fireworks with a torch and follow them carefully (ensure your fireworks comply with the British Safety Standard (BS 7114))

Keep all fireworks in a closed metal box and only light one at a time

Leave fireworks that fail to go off – never return to a lit firework

Ensure everyone stands a safe distance away when the fireworks are going off

Remove all debris and flammable objects from your firework display area

Alex said: "Eye damage caused by fireworks can lead to permanently reduced vision or even blindness yet is so often avoidable, so this year we're urging people to take extra care of their eyes and follow the SPARKLER safety code."

Alex continues: "If anyone in your party does suffer a firework eye injury you should seek medical attention immediately as quick action can minimise long-term damage."

If you're planning your own bonfire night party, remember there are certain legal restrictions governing the use of fireworks. It is illegal to set-off fireworks between 11 pm and 7 am (except on 5 November when the restriction is extended until midnight).

1. *Eye (2008) 22, 944–947*

2. *Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file30136.pdf>*

October 2010

Sheffield optician offers tips for night driving

As the nights draw in and we prepare for the clocks to go back on 30th October, a Sheffield optician warns of the implications of poor vision when driving after dark.

Independent optician Alex Gage has teamed up with the national sight charity, the Eyecare Trust¹, to highlight the importance of ensuring that your vision is roadworthy and alerts people to the potential consequences of poor night vision on themselves and other road users.

Alex, who owns practices in Woodseats and Broomhill, said; "Drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their sight is roadworthy every time they get behind the wheel of a car, yet worryingly, research conducted by the Trust found that more than half of us (53%) admit we have difficulty seeing clearly when driving at night². It's perhaps unsurprising then, that your risk of being involved in a road traffic accident increases significantly after dark."

Alex explained why the risk increases as daylight fades; "Low light levels will enlarge your pupil and accentuate any inherent focusing error that you may have - no matter how minor - which can lead to blurred or distorted vision."

Alex continued: "Many people, especially elderly motorists, also complain of being dazzled by halos and reflections from the headlights of oncoming vehicles. This can be a sign of cataracts but is often simply caused by a dirty windscreen or broken wiper-blades. Scratched or dirty specs can also create light distortions and distracting glare."

However, there are a number of simple steps that you can take to help you see more clearly when driving after dark.

Alex suggests the following top tips to help you to get a clear view of the road ahead...

- Have regular sight tests to ensure that your vision is clear and your eyes are healthy
- If you require prescription eyewear for driving make sure you wear it every time you get behind the wheel. Reflection free lenses can help prevent light distortion
- Never wear sunglasses or tinted lenses to reduce glare whilst driving at night – it's illegal!
- Keep your windscreen clean and smear free and check that your screen washer bottle is filled with wash of the right concentration for the expected temperatures
- Check your wiper blades for wear regularly
- Try concentrating on the nearside kerb as you drive

- Watch your speed. Dark conditions impair your depth perception and make objects suddenly appear as if from nowhere!

The law requires that all drivers can clearly read a standard car number plate from a distance of 20 metres and have good all-round vision with visual fields of 120°+.

For more advice about keeping your eyes fit to drive and for a free Driving after Dark fact sheet visit Alex Gage at 857 Chesterfield Road, Woodseats or at 4 Crookes Road, Broomhill.

September 2010

Modern Technology Leads to Risk of Short-sightedness

With people in the UK spending seven hours a day watching TV, surfing the net and using their mobile phones*, independent opticians in Sheffield are warning about the effects that our obsession with hi-tech devices is having on our eyes.

Under the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign, independent practice Alex Gage Optometrist on Chesterfield Road in Woodseats and Crookes Road in Broomhill is keen to raise awareness of the risk of developing short-sightedness, caused by constant and continued use of the latest gadgets.

The debate as to whether computer use causes deterioration of eye health has been documented ever since the introduction of the first PC. However, Alex points out that the humble computer, while still dominating our daily lives, is just one of the many devices now contributing to the increased possibility of consumers developing myopia, otherwise known as short-sightedness.

Alex said: "A day spent working at a computer is often interrupted by texting a friend from your smartphone, followed by an evening spent playing a video game, or soon, watching your favourite programme on a 3D television.

"As each new technological device that enters the market becomes the must have accessory, everyday lives are being spent moving from one gadget to another, putting constant stress and strain on the eyes.

"Any interaction with a digital device that requires sustained concentration will cause the inner eye muscles to tighten, prompting eye strain in some cases. As a result the eyes can become irritated, dry and uncomfortable. People may even suffer from blurred vision and headaches, both symptoms of short-sightedness."

Acknowledging the effects of the constant use of modern technology, the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign is encouraging people to visit their local optical practice for a regular eye test to identify any potential problems and seek advice about how best to manage the use of hi-tech gadgets to ensure pro-longed eye health.

Spokesman for the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign, Paul SurrIDGE, said: "Independent optical practices are there to learn about your lifestyle and help you take care of your long term eye health.

"Drawing on their expertise, independent opticians invest time in testing your eyes to see whether any stress or strain through continued close-up work is leading to short-sightedness."

To find out more about the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign, consumers can visit www.eyelocal.co.uk where they can access tips and advice on taking care of their eyes.

August 2010

Survey reveals alarming attitudes to eye health in Yorkshire and the Humber...as headaches go untreated

A survey showing how well we look after our eyesight has revealed that 22% of people in Yorkshire and the Humber confess to 'putting up' with painful headaches linked to poor vision rather than seeking help from an optician.

The survey of 3,000 people was commissioned by the www.eyelocal.co.uk and was conducted by One Poll.

It shows just how little care people take these days with their eyesight, with 27% admitting to not having been for an eye test for more than two years, despite 43% thinking they would benefit.

Even more worrying is that 48% said they would only go to the opticians if there was a problem with their eyesight. Conversely, 79% of those surveyed value their eyesight above all their other four senses including hearing, touch, taste and smell.

Commenting on the survey, independent Sheffield optometrist Alex Gage said "It's worrying that even painful headaches aren't enough to force people into going for an eye test and that so many people are putting their eye health at risk by not visiting an optician on a regular basis.

"Eye health is vitally important and it's only when people are faced with serious sight problems that they do something about it."

The Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign is keen to highlight that independent opticians have been an integral part of community life for decades and continue to play a vital role in serving the eye care needs of local people.

Alex added: "We'd like to see more people placing greater emphasis on the health of their eyes and in doing so discover the value of visiting an independent optician."

The survey also found that 24% of respondents preferred to visit their local independent and over 48% acknowledged the quality of care and service an independent optician provides, with 41% agreeing that independents are an important part of community life.

Alex continued; "Independent opticians are highly skilled professionals that take the time to understand a person and their lifestyle when reviewing the health of their eyes. As more and more independent businesses come under pressure to survive, independent opticians are thriving by offering great eye care and eye wear for all the family.

"I'd urge anyone who hasn't had their eyes examined in the last two years to get in touch by calling in at out Broomhill or Woodseats practices."

The Sight Care group is an organisation working to promote the values of independent optical practices. It is launching the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician nationwide awareness campaign to promote independent practices in their local community.

People can find out more about their local independent practice and get tips and advice on taking care of their eyes by visiting the Eye Love My Local Independent Optician campaign website: www.eyelovelocal.co.uk

July 2010

Sheffield optometrist inspired to fundraise by valued staff member

A Sheffield optometrist has launched a charity appeal following a valued member of staff's illness.

Independent optometrist Alex Gage has nominated **SAKA** Sheffield Area Kidney Association as his charity of the year after the manager of his Woodseats practice had a kidney transplant and has kick started his fundraising with an unusual and innovative appeal.

Alex explains; "I have set up a **Facebook** group for patients and friends of Alex Gage Optometrist in Woodseats and Broomhill and will donate £1 for each of the first 250 people who join our group. Simply visit www.alexgagevision.co.uk, click on the facebook link on the home page then click on the 'Like' button at the top of the facebook page."

Alex was inspired to support SAKA after 33 year old Cara Smith from Sheffield had a kidney transplant donated by her husband Carl Smith in June last year. Alex said; "Cara has been with me for 11 and a half years and is a vital member of our team. Supporting SAKA is the least that I can do to thank them for the support that they have given Cara over the years."

Cara is delighted that the charity will benefit from Alex's generosity; "It all came about because I sent Alex and the team a SAKA charity Christmas card just when Alex was thinking about a local charity to support for 2010."

Cara was diagnosed with chronic renal disease when she was 13 years old. Her kidney function deteriorated slowly but at the end of 2008 Cara was advised that she would need to go on dialysis or have a transplant. Both Cara's husband Carl & brother Kristian went for the initial tests and both proved to be a match but her husband selflessly insisted it be him. Cara explains what happened next; "In June 2009 we went in for the operation. They removed Carl's kidney first and then transplanted it into me and hey presto it worked first time. I do have to take anti-rejection drugs to keep the precious cargo working but it is worth it, I feel much better than I did before and I don't have to undergo dialysis."

SAKA was formed in 1976, the year that Cara was born, to help kidney patients and their families cope with kidney failure and to help fund research into kidney disease. If you would like to support SAKA, please visit www.saka.org.uk or call Secretary Betty Rayner on 0114 246 2237.

In the past, Alex and his teams at Woodseats and Broomhill have raised over £3000 for Sheffield Childrens Hospital.

June 2010

Alex Gage goes green to support Broomhill Festival

A Sheffield Optometrist has entered into the green spirit of the **2010 Broomhill Festival** with a charity window display.

Alex Gage's Broomhill practice is encouraging passers-by to go green whilst benefitting **Vision Aid Overseas** with a request that they donate unwanted spectacles to the Crookes Road practice.

Alex Gage Optical assistants Cath Taylor and Jo Sawyer have created a fun and eye catching window display featuring the legendary 'Mr. P.' to help communicate their appeal. Cath elaborates about the choice of window display; "We have always collected spectacles for recycling by Vision Aid Overseas and when we learnt that the theme of the window display competition of this year's festival was 'Going Green', we thought that it would be a good idea to promote recycling of a very beneficial kind."

Vision Aid Overseas is an international charity dedicated to transforming access to eyecare services in developing countries by establishing Vision Centres, training healthcare workers and utilising the expertise of volunteers to undertake outreach programmes in areas away from existing facilities.

The 36th Broomhill Festival runs from 11th to 20th June and features events and activities for all ages from concerts, talks and an art exhibition to five-a-side football, a family fun day, a garden party and lots more. For more information and ticket sales call 0114 2663613. Proceeds from the festival benefits local charities including **The Lainey K Foundation**, Trinity Day Care Trust and Ben's Place.

May 2010

Alex Gage supports national Vision Matters initiative

A Sheffield optometrist is lending his support to a nationwide initiative to promote the importance of eye health and regular sight tests next month.

Independent optometrist Alex Gage will be raising awareness of **National Eye Health Week** (14 – 20 June) by displaying posters at both its Broomhill and Woodseats practices and by encouraging people to think about eye health with a simple quiz.

For the first time the UK eye care sector is joining forces with charities and healthcare professionals to promote the importance of eye health and the need for regular sight tests for all.

Alex explains why he is delighted to help to promote the week; "1.8 million people in the UK are living with sight loss. For 53% of these, a simple sight test and new spectacles could really help. Sight tests are free for many people including children under 16, children under 19 in full time education, people over 60, those diagnosed with diabetes and glaucoma and people on income support so we would encourage people to pop in to either Crookes Road in Broomhill or Chesterfield Road in Woodseats to find out more."

The theme of the awareness week is Vision Matters and you can find more information about how to look after your eyes at www.visionmatters.org.uk.

Alex Gage Family Optometrist provides a warm welcome and affordable vision services for the whole family. Its two practices are run by Alex, his wife Sarah and a team of experienced optometric and dispensing staff who provide free advice and an extensive range of optical services including eye tests, contact lens fitting, sports vision screening, diabetic screening and fundus photography.

March 2010

Sheffield optometrist offers revolutionary treatment for myopia

A Sheffield optometrist has become one of only a handful of eye care professionals in the North of England to offer a revolutionary, non surgical treatment for short sightedness (myopia).

Independent optometrist Alex Gage is the first in South Yorkshire to offer the **i-GO** ortho-k (overnight vision correction) night time contact lens at his practices in Woodseats and Broomhill, Sheffield. Whilst many of us may not have heard of Ortho-k (Orthokeratology) before, it has been around since the 1960s and has recently been perfected by **i-GO** so that patients can enjoy freedom from daytime contact lenses or glasses simply and without the need for surgery.

The i-GO lens is worn overnight and acts like a dental brace that gently reshapes your eyes whilst you sleep and creates a temporary new structure to the cornea that means that you can read without glasses or contact lenses for up to 24 hours. Alex Gage is delighted that he can now offer this service to his clients; "Myopia affects half of the population and any clinically proven, non surgical intervention that can improve the lives of people affected has to be explored. In addition, latest ongoing **research from America*** indicates that overnight vision correction lenses can slow or even halt the development of short-sightedness in children."

Alex's wife, Sarah, also an optometrist and partner in the business, has been wearing the i-GO overnight lenses since before Christmas and said; "I have been amazed by the freedom that the lenses have given me and how easy they are to use. I used to wear daily contact lenses and sometimes found that my eyes felt tired, so it's very liberating to be able to read easily without lenses."

To find out how i-GO Overnight Vision Correction contact lenses work and to see [if you are suitable](#) to benefit from this groundbreaking new treatment, call either Woodseats (0114) 274 8582 or Broomhill (0114) 266 7066 practice.

March 2010

Alex Gage launches sight saving initiative

Ignorance may be bliss, but it could leave you blind!

Local optician Alex Gage aims to raise awareness of glaucoma*, one of the UK's leading causes of preventable blindness, with a new sight-saving initiative.

The 'Know your Risks' initiative – launched to mark **World Glaucoma Day** (12 March 2010) – is designed to educate people about the condition, which threatens the sight of half a million people in England and Wales alone**.

"Glaucoma is a devastating eye condition" explains Alex Gage of Alex Gage Family Optometrist "you can lose 40 per cent of your vision without even realising there is anything wrong!"

The condition slowly erodes your peripheral vision before attacking your central detailed vision. At the outset you won't notice a change in your ability to see as your eyes can work together to trick your brain into thinking you can see clearly but your sight is gradually deteriorating.

National sight charity, the **Eyecare Trust***** estimates as many as 250,000 Britons are living with the condition without knowing – despite the fact that glaucoma can be diagnosed during a routine eye examination.

Damage caused by glaucoma cannot be recovered – worrying news for all drivers who by law must have visual fields of 120°+. Motorists who unwittingly drive around with the condition are also five-times more likely to be involved in a serious road traffic accident****.

While anyone can develop glaucoma, the 'Know Your Risks' initiative aims to highlight those who are most at risk. High-risk groups include: people aged 40+; those with a family history of glaucoma; diabetics and people of African-Caribbean origin. **Click here for the Know your Risks questionnaire.**

To assess your chances of developing the condition Alex Gage is inviting everyone to take a simple test to discover whether they have a high, moderate, or low risk of developing glaucoma.

Anyone at high risk of the disease is then being urged to take URGENT action to prevent needless sight loss and the inevitable impact this can have on your quality of life.

Alex explains: "Early detection of the condition through routine sight testing is vital for the successful treatment of glaucoma which, when caught early, can often be easily managed using eye drops or in certain cases laser treatment.

Unfortunately all too often we see patients who have put off having a sight test until the condition is advanced and it's too late to save loss of vision."

Everyone should have a routine eye examination once every two years and those who are most at risk of glaucoma (for example people aged 40+ with a family history of the condition or with ocular hypertension) are entitled to annual eye examinations paid for by the NHS.

The free 'Know Your Risks' test, fact sheets plus general advice and information about diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma is available from Alex Gage at 857 Woodseats Road, Chesterfield and 4 Crookes Road, Broomhill.

**Glaucoma is a name given to a group of eye conditions that affect the optic nerve and disturb peripheral vision. The condition accounts for around 15 per cent of all blind registrations in England and Wales.*

***Two hundred and fifty million people in England and Wales have been diagnosed with glaucoma and a further quarter of a million are estimated to be living with an undetected form of the condition.*

****The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to raise awareness of all aspects of eye health and the importance of regular sight testing.*

*****Roadmap to driving wellness, American Society on Aging, 2006.*

February 2010

Alex Gage only sports vision practice in the north of England to reach national final

A Sheffield Optometrist is celebrating after being short-listed for a national award.

Alex Gage's sports vision business, 2012 Sports Vision (Yorkshire) Ltd, has reached the final four of the prestigious Optician Magazine Award to find the best Sports Vision Practice in the country.

Alex, who runs his sports vision business from his Broomhill practice in Crookes Road, had to demonstrate his commitment to, and expertise in, all elements of sports vision including dispensing, communication and making sports eyewear accessible to all in his nomination.

Alex is delighted with the news; "2012 Sports Vision is a young, small yet dynamic company, but it has set its sights high and the shortlist success demonstrates that we can compete with larger sports vision practices throughout the country.

With the 2012 Olympics coming to London and the regions, the spotlight on Sheffield and sport is going to be bigger than ever before so it's really satisfying that 2012 Sports Vision has received such a vote of confidence at this early stage."

2012 Sports Vision is the only sports vision practice in the North of England to have been short-listed for the prestigious award and the judges said that they had received a large number of high quality entries for this year's competition.

The winners will be announced at a Gala Dinner at The London Hilton Park Lane on 17th April.