

Contact Lenses: Out with the Old/In with the New?

Ralph E Gundel¹

Corresponding author: [email address]

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To answer this question: I certainly hope not, at least not always. Without a doubt over the past several years the contact lens industry has brought forth numerous new materials, designs, and modes of contact lens manufacturing. But that should not translate into a universal switch from the “old” to the “new”. I would like to share some specific instances where older lens materials and designs should still have a place in your practice.

Although without a question newer more oxygen permeable rigid gas permeable (RGP) materials have been key to the introduction of such modalities as overnight wear of Orthokeratology lenses, these materials often have some less advantageous attributes. Although we often only consider oxygen permeability (Dk) and lens wettability when selecting a RGP material, one should also consider that such materials often have lower material hardness and greater modulus. This translates into a material more prone to being scratched, deposited and/or warped. For a patient, who for reasons of compromised dexterity, or less than optimal lens care compliance, is more apt to warp and/or allow deposits to form on the lens, an “older” lower Dk material would be more advantageous. Assuming that the patient is not napping or sleeping in their lenses, nor has a high refractive error that would require increased lens thickness at the center or edge, the durability and deposit resistance of an “older” less oxygen permeable material may be far better suited.

Also to be considered when fitting RGP's is lens design. As of late there has been a wealth of information regarding the use of scleral lens