

this, however the effect of storage conditions on the results of these biomechanical tests are unclear.

Aims The objective of this study was to investigate effects of commonly used laboratory storage media on the mechanical performance of retinal samples.

Methods Freshly enucleated porcine eyes were dissected, and superior vertical strips taken. Strips were incubated in phosphate buffered saline (PBS), balanced salt solution (BSS) Ringer's solution and extracted porcine vitreous (control) for 60 minutes at 4°C. Sixteen 3x9mm strips of porcine retina, 4 per group, were subjected to uniaxial load to failure testing post incubation. Strip thickness was determined by light microscopy.

Results The mean maximum stress was closest to the control (5.6KPa) for BSS (7.4KPa) followed by Ringer's solution (1.6KPa) then PBS (0.4KPa). All changes were significantly different to the control ($P<0.05$).

Conclusion The biomechanical properties of porcine retina are highly variable depending on the media they are stored in pre-testing. Strips incubated in BSS provided results closest to the control samples. Caution should be taken when considering results taken from different storage media when assessing biomechanical changes in the retina and other soft tissues.

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P-03 PRACTICE APPROACHES AMONG CANADIAN OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

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Introduction Although there has been a trend towards gender balance in ophthalmology, this has not yet translated into equal representation in leadership roles.

Aims We aimed to assess the current practice patterns of ophthalmology in Canada by analysing gender disparities in leadership and identifying barriers to leadership advancement.

Methods A listing of all ophthalmologists registered with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 2019 was used as the sample population. A listserv was created by searching public websites and email invitations to participate in a survey was forwarded.

Results Out of 117 participants, 38 (32.8%) were female, with an average age of 49 years compared to 57 years for males. Female practitioners had 16.9 years of practice on average, while males had 25.6 years ($P<0.001$). Fellowship numbers were similar for both genders ($P=0.39$), but females leaned towards neuro-ophthalmology, while males favored retina.

Thirteen females (34.2%) and nine males (11.5%) held graduate degrees ($P=0.005$). Practice settings showed no significant gender difference, whether hospital-based or private clinics ($P>0.05$).

Fewer females held academic appointments (55.2% vs. 84.6%, $P=0.001$), especially full/associate professorships (18.4% vs. 41.0%, $P=0.02$). Assistant professorships were comparable (26.3% vs. 37.2%, $P=0.29$). Both genders faced similar career advancement challenges, including work-life balance, support, and time constraints.

Conclusion Ophthalmology has a male-dominated practice, and Canadian leadership trends reflect this. Inequities in higher

leadership positions may stem from historical gender imbalances. Our survey reveals that those dissatisfied with their careers cite barriers related to work-life balance and support.

P-04 PATIENT OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES OF A COMMUNITY-BASED GLAUCOMA CLINIC

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Introduction Glaucoma care demand in UK hospitals has increased rapidly in recent years resulting in a push to community care models to reduce the burden on hospitals and on patients.

Aims To ascertain patient's experiences of their care delivered in community clinics.

Methods Patients' thoughts of feeling safe under the care of the community clinical team were gathered. Patient experiences were assessed using a modified Glaucoma Patient-reported Outcome and Experience Measure (POEM) instrument that included patient's perspective on diagnosis, treatment, fear of blindness, and experience.

Results Ninety-six consecutive patients (M:F 47:49, mean age 70±12 years) completed the study. Feeling safe under the clinical team produced a mean Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) score of 90 (SD 15) and feeling care was organised produced a mean VAS score of 87 (SD 17). Patients had positive perceptions of their clinic experience with 96% of patients reporting that their experience of attending the community clinic was comfortable, and 93% felt their experience was the same as expected from the hospital. Patient age, gender, disease characteristics, and socioeconomic status had no influence on perceived experience. Patients aged <60 years had significantly lower understanding of their diagnosis compared to older groups ($P=0.027$), as did suspect glaucoma patients when compared to primary open glaucoma patients ($P=0.045$).

Conclusion Patients expressed a positive experience, felt safe under the care of their clinical team and that their care was organised. Patients <60 years, and those with no confirmed diagnosis may benefit from longer consultation time and educational materials to improve their understanding of the disease.

P-05 THE ATTITUDES AND CLINICAL BEHAVIOUR OF EYECARE PRACTITIONERS TOWARDS FITTING CONTACT LENSES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Introduction In the UK, prescribing contact lenses (CLs) for children is undertaken by two groups of Eyecare Practitioners (ECPs): optometrists and contact lens opticians (CLOs).

Aims To explore the attitudes and prescribing habits of UK ECPs for fitting CLs in patients under 18 years of age.