

UK pharmacists losing sight of eye health opportunities

Pharmacists could be missing out on profitable opportunities to educate consumers about eye health, according to new research¹ from the makers of lutein, an ingredient proven to maintain healthy eyes², found in dietary supplement ICaps[®].

Only one in five people questioned were aware of the importance of lutein as nutritional support for eyes and skin and only 7% heard about it from their pharmacist. UK pharmacy sales of supplements are the lowest in Europe, with just 28% of people purchasing from pharmacy, compared with 39% from health food stores and 41% from supermarkets.

Market analysts Frost & Sullivan estimate the European lutein market to be worth \$30.5m and are projecting 10% growth over the next four years.

Mike Withe, Marketing Manager, Alcon UK, said: "The research shows that nearly half of UK consumers are considering taking specialist eye care supplements, but only one third currently take dietary supplements of any kind. Clearly, the potential for pharmacy sales growth is significant."

He continued: "Around three million people in the UK current have some form of sight impairment. With 70% of people 'rarely or never' visiting an ophthalmologist for sight testing, eye health advice from pharmacists could be critical to preserving the nation's vision."

Ends

Notes to editors

1. Research undertaken by Frost & Sullivan, Feb 2006, among 3,012 adults in Europe, 500 in the UK.

2. More than 115 clinical trials and studies suggest that lutein and zeaxanthin—ingredients in ICaps—can help supplement levels of macular pigment that may have fallen due to years of exposure to light and oxidative stress.

Research published in 2004ⁱ shows that lutein may even help reverse symptoms of early stage dry AMD, with sufferers who took 10mg of lutein daily for 12 months showing improved a 45% improvement in macular pigment density, with marked improvements in near and distance visual acuity, contrast sensitivity and glare recovery.

- ICaps retail at £9.95 for a one-month pack of 60 tablets. Visit www.icapsinfo.co.uk for advice and stockists details
- To ask Dr Frank Eperjesi a question related to eyecare please visit the website www.icapsinfo.co.uk

ⁱ Richer S P et al (2004). The lutein Antioxidant Supplementation Trial. J Am Opt Assn (75) 4: 216-230.