

Personal Preferences on Light-filtering Lenses

About ISEE

ISEE is a charitable organisation which aims to raise awareness of Irlen Syndrome, a neurological visual processing disorder also known as scotopic sensitivity syndrome and visual stress.

ISEE is the known-as name of IS Education Europe, a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

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Introduction

Filtering artificial lighting through a glass, and changing the spectrum was recommended by school principal Ray in 1938. Ray discovered for himself, that artificial lighting made it difficult to read¹. Fifty years later, adult students reported a similar discovery to Irlen, a psychologist.

Adult students discovered that a plastic-coloured transparent light filtering sheet when placed over text, made reading easier². Irlen researched the condition further and developed a method for evaluating the need for light spectrum filters. Another psychologist, Professor Wilkins, developed the "Colorimeter" which assists optometrists prescribe light filtering lenses. Optometrists use the term "Visual Stress"³.

In the UK, The National Health Service (NHS) does not typically fund evaluation and lens costs for Irlen Syndrome. In addition, the NHS does not fund Irlen Method tests nor Irlen spectral filters.

There are no published studies which indicate the opinions of people who have experienced both Irlen Syndrome evaluation methods and consequent lenses. However, this article reports (from an unpublished study⁴) the opinions of some people, on services provided by Irlen Consultants versus those provided by optometrists who use the Colorimeter. The article concludes that further research on different diagnostic methods and consequent light filtering lenses is warranted.

Opinions

Respondent A

‘The NHS appointment was a complete waste of time, it told us nothing we didn’t already know and it was nothing more than an eye test. My son has annual eye tests and we knew his eyesight was not an issue, but the NHS insisted this was at the root of the problem. My son’s point of view was ignored throughout the assessment’.

‘At the assessment with the Irlen diagnostician, our son explained for the first time how he saw the world. When he tried the lenses on, he gave us a big smile and told us he could finally see the world as it is meant to look’.

Opinions

Respondent B

‘The [NHS] appointment was stressful for me and for [my daughter]. My daughter was “made to read aloud” and felt “distraught” at her apparent inability to read.

The Irlen Method focussed on “fixing the way the world was perceived. Addressing the reading challenges was easy once the environmental distortions were fixed by using the correct lenses”.

Opinions

Respondent C

The respondent stated that no information or explanation of their son's 'condition' was provided by the NHS or by the orthoptics specialist at another centre in Scotland, where their son had been assessed privately.

'By this point, my wife and I had researched IS and we were shocked that we seemed to know more about [the condition] than the professional we were paying to assess our son'.



References

1. W.E. Johnson , LinkedIn, “Cui Malo”
 2. Irlen, H. (2010) The Irlen Revolution. Square One Publishers, New York, 2010
 3. Lightstone, A., Lightstone, T. & Wilkins, A (1999) Both coloured overlays and coloured lenses can improve reading fluency, but their optimal chromaticities differ. Ophthalmic Physiol Opt. 1999 Jul;1999 (4):279-85. doi: 10.1046/j.1475-1313.1999
 4. Opinions were sought by as part of an MBA Thesis by M Lansdowne, University of Stirling, 2021.
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For more information on Irlen Syndrome, visit
www.i-see.co.uk