

Irlen Syndrome: Personal Experiences and Opinions

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).

Charity Registration No.: SC050979



Introduction

Although it is estimated that Irlen Syndrome¹ affects approximately 15-20% of the general population, awareness among education and health professionals and the general public is low and represents a challenge which affects the support available to those with this neurological condition.

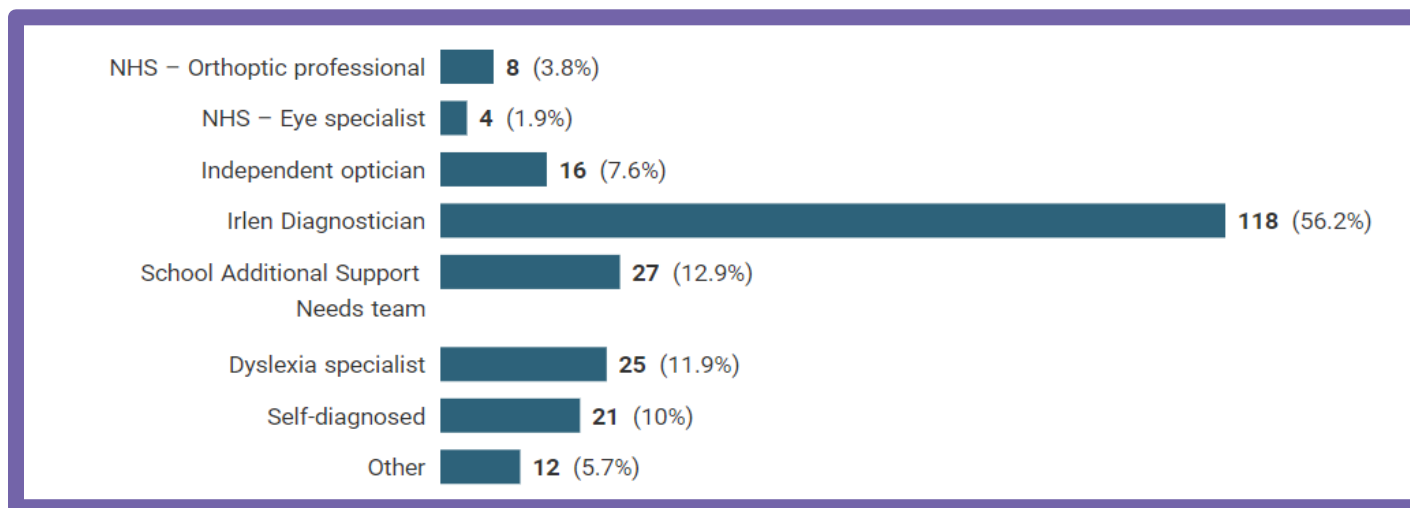
Findings from an unpublished research² highlight personal experiences and opinions from a sample of over 500 UK-based people.

The research highlights personal preferences and opinions with regards to lived experiences and underlined the need for early screening, which would enable education professionals to implement targeted support plans.



Opinions - Awareness

The majority of respondents (62.4%) had not been aware of IS before being advised they have it. Over 56% of the respondents were informed about IS by an Irlen Diagnostician, with ASN teams (12.9%) and dyslexia specialists (12.9%) representing the second and third most common source of initial identification of this condition.

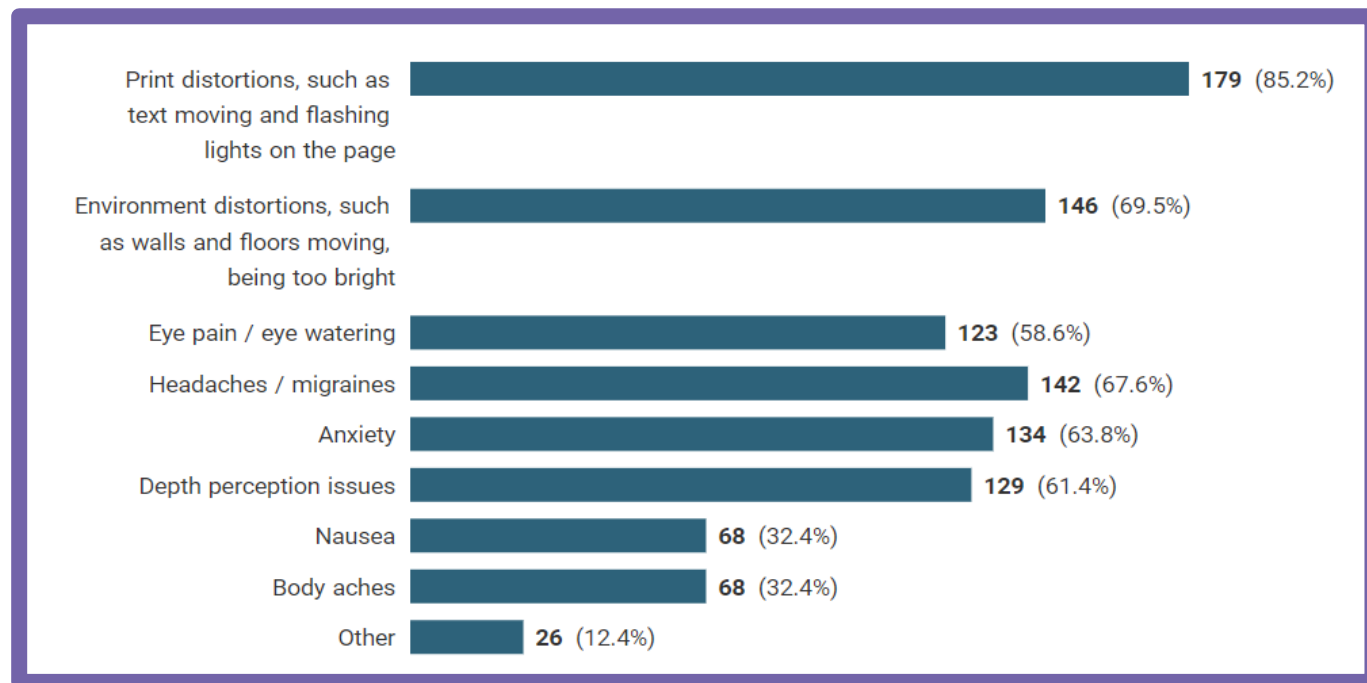


NHS orthoptic (3.8%) and eye specialists' (1.9%) diagnoses were among the lowest contributors of IS identification among the respondents. This could be linked to the lack of awareness of this condition among NHS healthcare professionals.

Opinions – Impact on Attainment

Most respondents (63.3%) indicated that IS had a significant impact on their school performance, with the main symptoms ranging from print (85.2%) and environment (69.5) distortions through to migraines (67.6%), anxiety (63.8%) and depth perception issues.

Additional symptoms listed by some the respondents include: fatigue, emotional effects, sensory overload, “busy/fuzzy head”, extreme light sensitivity.

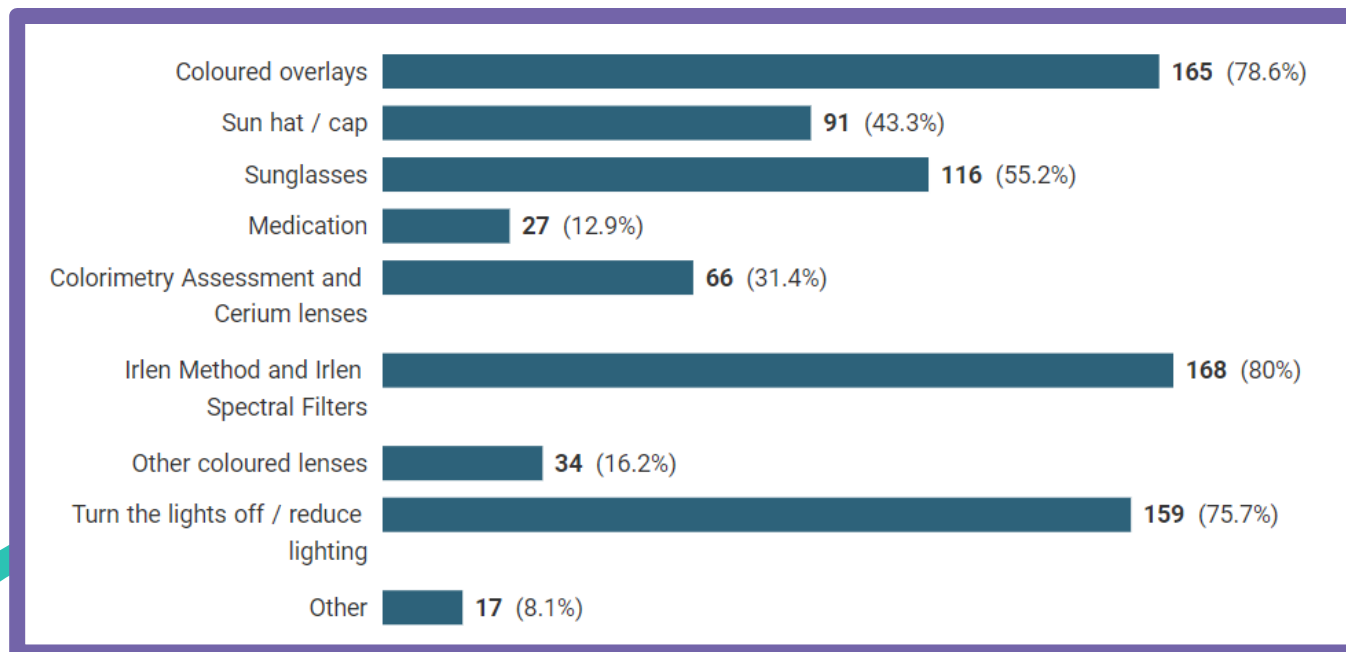


While 32% of the respondents declared to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the support received from their school to help them overcome the challenges related to IS, the compound percentage of those who were either dissatisfied (20%) or very dissatisfied (29.5%) amounts to 49.5%, which would indicate a need to improve the current support available to pupils with this condition.

Opinions – Alleviating Symptoms

The respondents were asked to indicate the approaches they have tried to alleviate the symptoms and these include Irlen Method and Spectral Filters (80%), coloured overlays (78.6%), reduction of light (75.7%).

Additional suggestions were added by some of the respondents and include coloured LED lighting, coloured paper and taking regular breaks.

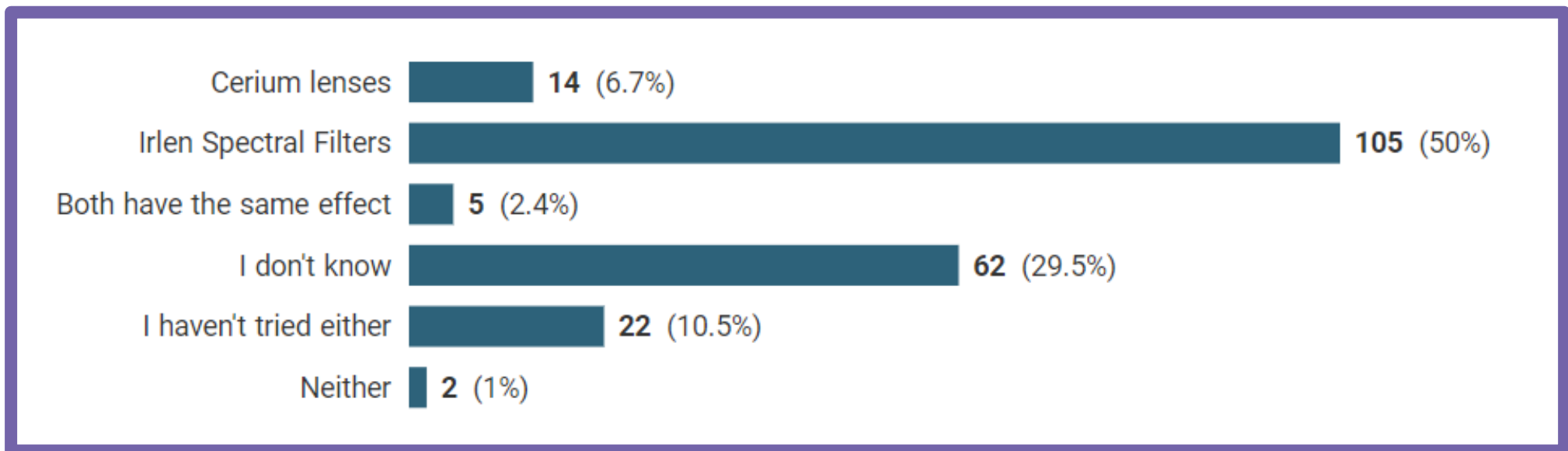


Over 64% of the respondents agreed that the most effective solution to overcome the debilitating effects of IS symptoms is the Irlen Method with Spectral Filters

12.4% believe that the Cerium lenses offer an effective solution.

Opinions – Alleviating Symptoms

When the respondents who had experienced both the Irlen Method with Spectral Filters and the Colorimetry Method with Cerium lenses were asked to choose the most method in reducing the symptoms, 50% selected the Irlen Method with the filters, versus 6.7% who selected the Colorimetry Method with Cerium lenses.





References

1. Irlen, H. (2010) The Irlen Revolution. Square One Publishers, New York, 2010
 2. 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