



This year, the theme of **World Sight Day**, promoted by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)**, is **#LoveYourEyes**.

Following in the wake of COVID-19, myopia will be the next pandemic to emerge, especially among children and young people

- According to the WHO, the increased use of screens and lack of natural light are leading to an increase in myopia among children. If the trend continues, in 30 years' time 50% of the world's population will be short-sighted.
- As is the case every year, the Foundation of the Spanish Society of Ophthalmology (SEO) has organized an event to celebrate World Sight Day.
- ESTEVE, a pharmaceutical company committed to ophthalmology, has contributed by sponsoring this scientific session in Madrid.

Barcelona, 14 October 2021.- Remote work, online classes, leisure time spent on platforms, lack of sunshine... are determining factors behind the increased number of cases of myopia during the pandemic, especially among children and adolescents, who are more sensitive to environmental changes. Several studies already suggest that myopia will be the next pandemic to emerge on a global scale.

One such study points to a lack of sunlight as the reason for the increase in myopia during the lockdown. The sun allows the retina to release dopamine, a neurotransmitter that prevents the elongation of the eyeball, one of the factors that cause myopia. Another study concludes that the group most affected by myopia during lockdown were children between 6 and 8 years of age, because at this age they are more sensitive to environmental changes. Moreover, the use of screens has increased substantially during the pandemic.

Another message from the WHO on **World Sight Day** is that almost everyone on the planet will suffer from an eye health problem over the course of their lifetime. That is why the aim of this event is to raise awareness on the one hand of the causes of avoidable blindness and visual impairment and, on the other, of the solutions that exist for these problems and the rehabilitation of people suffering from them. As it does every year, the **SEO Foundation** has organized a **Commemorative Session** with the collaboration of the **Royal Academy of Medicine of Spain** and the sponsorship of **ESTEVE**.

The event addressed the most current issues in eye health and also found time for a debate on the fight against rare diseases and the need for a coordinated effort to provide appropriate care. In addition, the **ONCE** has dedicated its lottery ticket for the **14th of**

October to World Sight Day, and several **patients' associations** have showcased their achievements and strategic actions.

The programme included presentations on various topics such as congenital glaucoma, artificial intelligence in the fight against blindness, screen syndrome in children and childhood myopia as an “emerging pandemic.” It also highlighted the achievements of the “Vision2020 Program”, the comprehensive rehabilitation and support service for people affected by poor vision and those of the European Rare Diseases Network.

ESTEVE's commitment to ophthalmology and eye health: *Review*

Ophthalmology is one of ESTEVE's priority therapeutic areas and it provides solutions to patients' unmet needs and useful information and training for professionals. In this regard, in addition to sponsoring the SEO Foundation Commemorative Session, this year it has also organized a new edition of the ***Annual Review***. This meeting analyses the main scientific innovations that have been presented at ophthalmology congresses in Spain and abroad and the work developed and presented by leading experts in each of the areas that make up the specialty.

In the 2021 edition, more than 170 ophthalmologists gathered at the Euroforum Auditorium Theatre in San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Madrid). The panelists and speakers redoubled their efforts of synthesis and analysis by expanding the spectrum of information to the national and international scientific activity undertaken in 2019, 2020 and part of 2021, in a format that has already been endorsed by the interest, reception and follow-up of ophthalmologists.

Once again, the success of the *Annual Review* has been due to the collaboration and active participation of the members of the Spanish Society of Ophthalmology, and that of the specialized societies: Retina (SERV), Ocular Surface (SESOC), Surgery (SECOIR), Glaucoma (SEG), Oculoplastic (SECPOO) and Inflammation (SEIOC), whose contributions attest to the scientific nature of the *Annual Review*.

References

[Myopia Progression in Children During COVID-19 Home Confinement in Argentina by Carolina Picotti, Victoria Sanchez, Leonardo Fernandez Irigaray, Ian G. Morgan, Rafael Iribarren :: SSRN 2020 as the Year of Quarantine Myopia | Ophthalmology | JAMA Ophthalmology | JAMA Network](#)

About ESTEVE

ESTEVE (www.esteve.com) is a global pharmaceutical company with headquarters in Barcelona. The company's mission is to advance in innovation in order to improve people's lives, and ever since its foundation in 1929, it has focused on providing solutions for unmet medical needs. ESTEVE has an important presence in Europe thanks to its affiliates and its own production centers dedicated to the development and manufacture of active pharmaceutical ingredients in Spain, Mexico and China, as well as a pharmaceutical plant in Germany.

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