

Patient Perceptions of Contact Lens Waste

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Introduction

- Contact lens waste has gone unnoticed by the majority of contact lens wearing patients. The lack of knowledge on existing recycling programs may be the culprit to the growing waste.
- Only one third of the U.S. population recycles.
- The Bausch & Lomb One by One program recycles contact lenses and their packaging. The program also donates \$1 to Optometry Giving Sight for every pound of recyclable material received
- By educating patients on simple strategies to reduce contact lens waste, they will likely be more conscious of their recycling efforts.

Methods

- The data was collected at the University Eye Center in Big Rapids, MI from June to December 2020.
- An optional 11 question, multiple choice survey was administered to every contact lens patient. Information such as replacement schedule, disposal methods of blister packaging and contact lenses, and knowledge of recycling programs was obtained. The survey also asked if participants knew about the UEC recycling program and if they were interested in using it
- The number of patients that are recycling their materials and the number of people that would be interested in doing so if they knew a program was available were also gauged on this analysis.
- The sample size was significantly reduced due to the closing of clinic from March-June 2020, due to efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Results

Data was collected from 11 subjects, ranging from 18 to 54 years old. One subject was unable to complete the survey, due to use of rigid gas permeable lenses instead of daily disposable lenses. Results from each category are listed below in **Tables 1-5**.

Table 1: Number of days per week wearing CLs

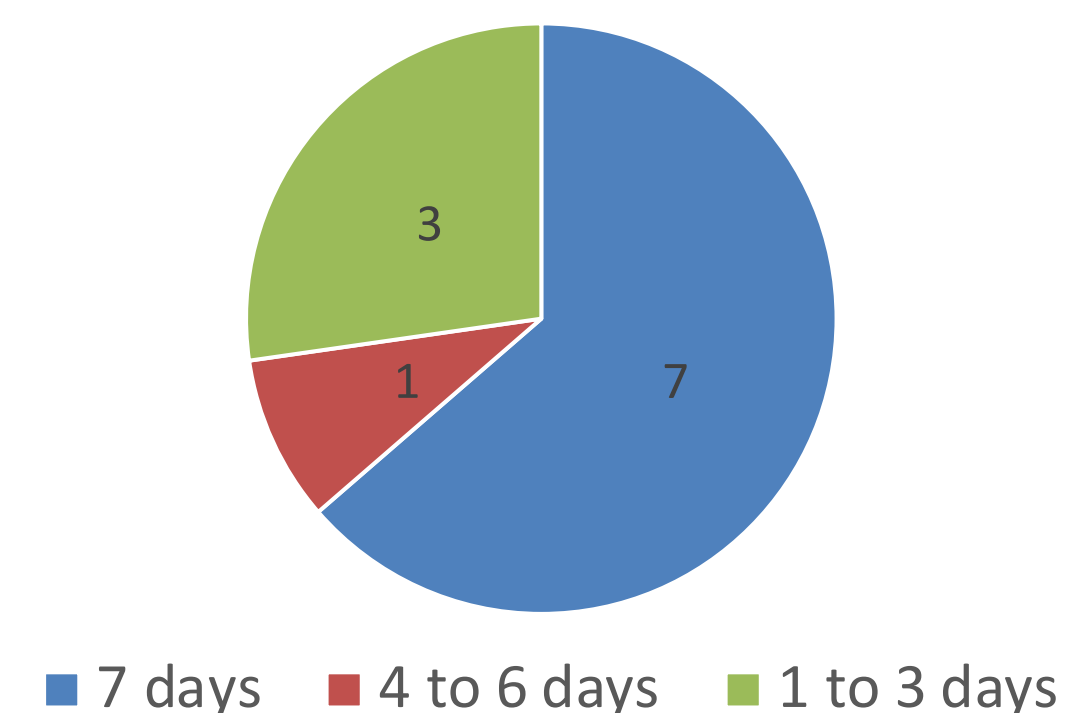


Table 2: Replacement Schedule

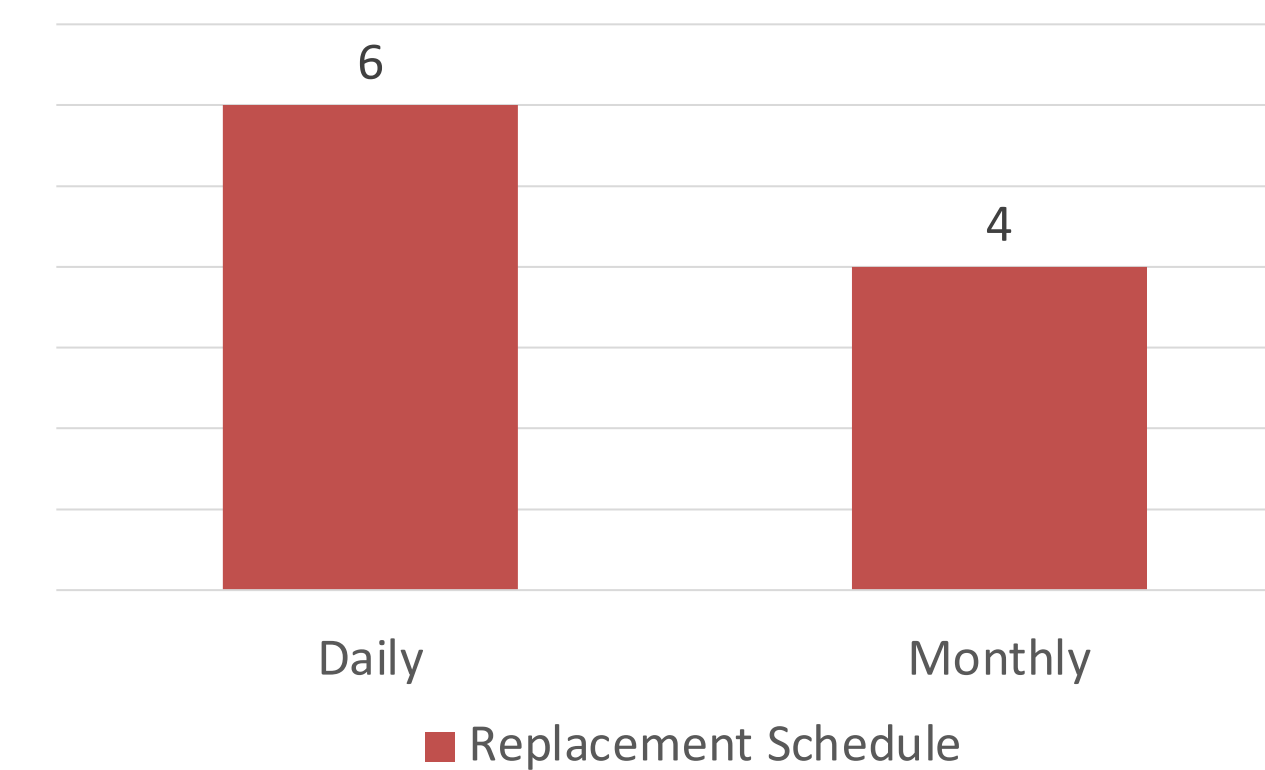


Table 3: Method of Disposal Used

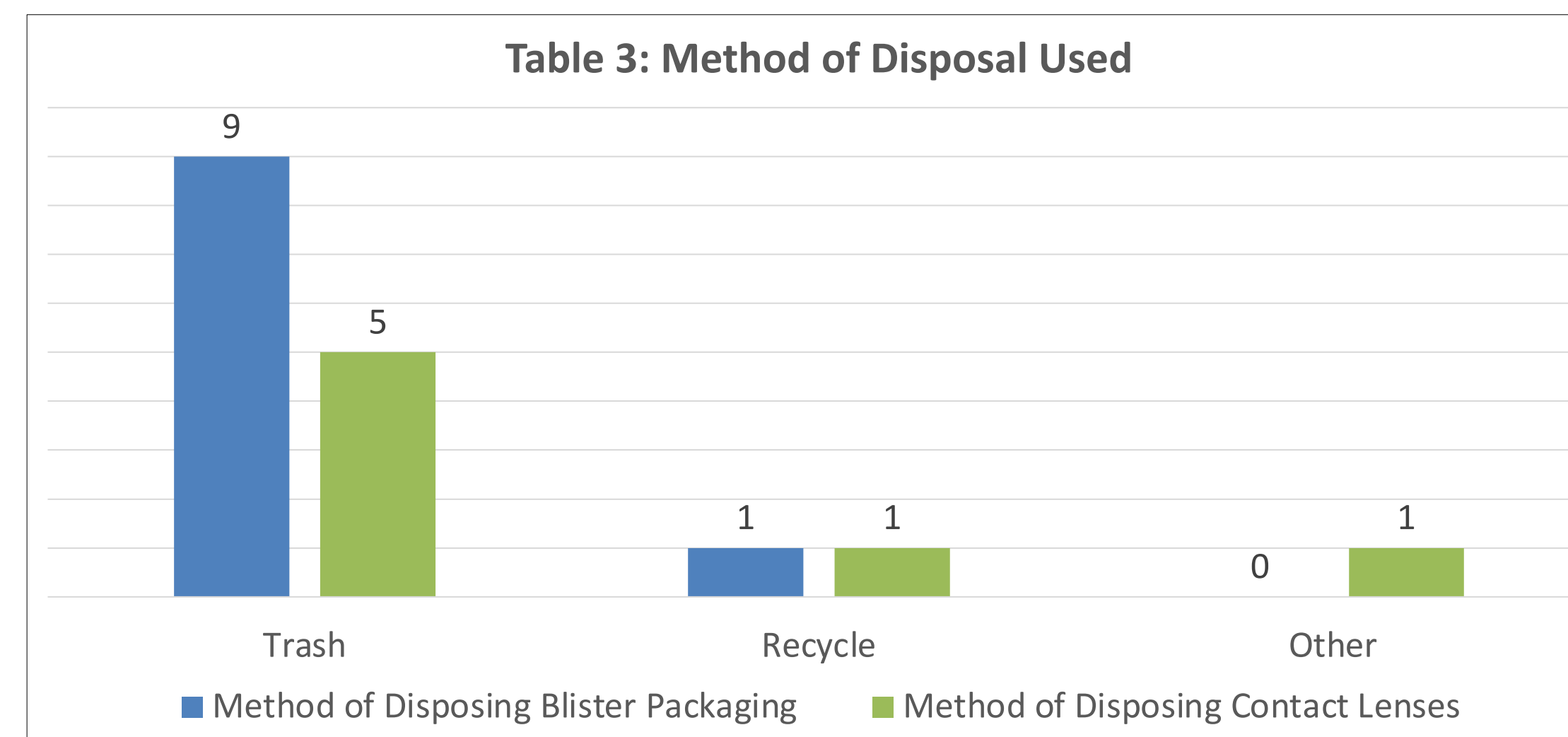


Table 4: Aware of UEC Recycling Program

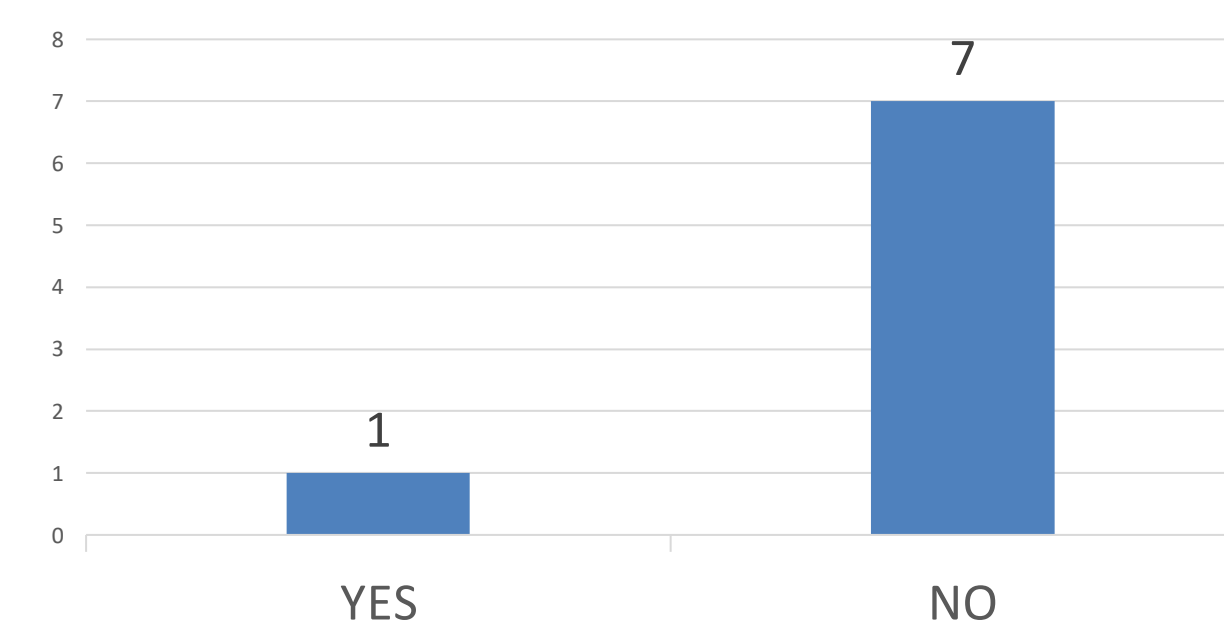
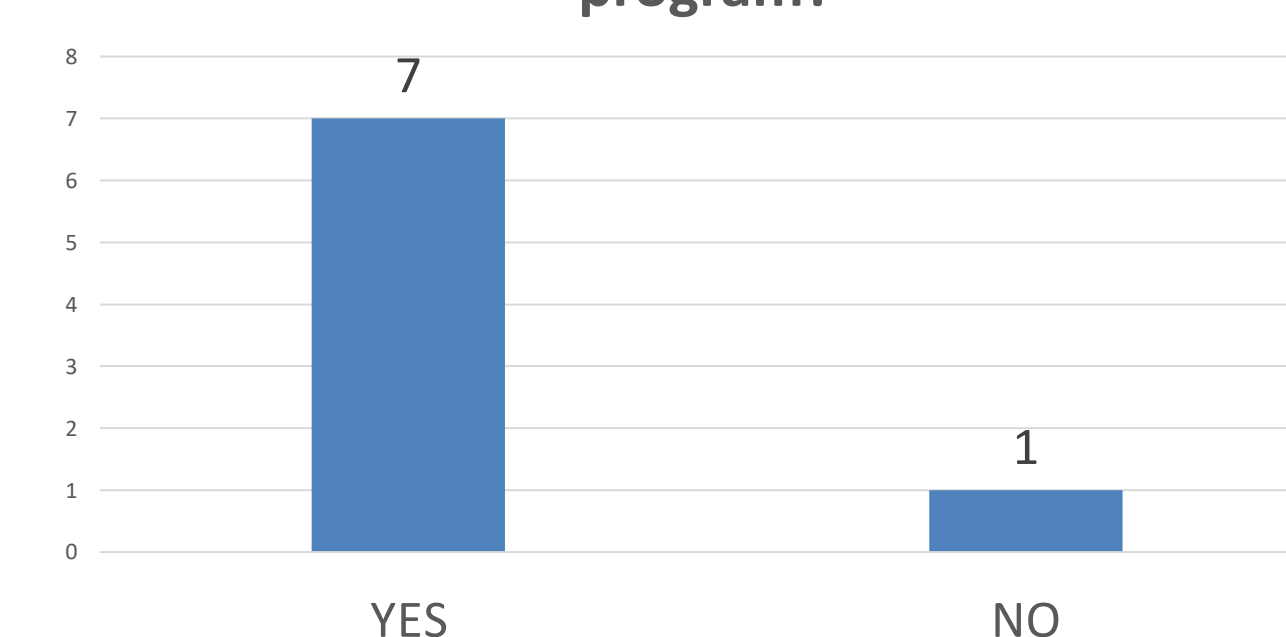


Table 5: Interest in recycling with UEC program?



Conclusions

- Daily disposable contact lenses are generally the safest option for patients, but they accrue the greatest amount of waste.
- The majority of patients do not recycle their contact lenses, nor are they aware of available recycling programs.
- Patients are interested in recycling their contact lenses
- Optometrists should properly educate their patients on available recycling programs and encourage their patients to participate.

References

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