We have reported previously that approximately half of soft contact lens (CL) wearers could be regarded as ‘problem’ patients. These patients experience dryness, discomfort, reduced comfortable wearing time (CWT) and compromised ocular physiology, although they are often regarded as ‘clinically normal’ by eye care practitioners. Understanding the nature of this population and investigating new CL options is of great importance.

Replacement schedule and CL material are parameters that are often taken into consideration by eye care practitioners, as they are known to affect ocular surface symptoms[1].

**Methods**

- **Design:** Part 1: The prevalence of key symptoms and signs was measured in 364 Reusable CL wearers: dryness, irritation, reduced CWT and clinically relevant bulbar or limbal hyperaemia and corneal staining (Table 1).
- **Part 2:** 235 ‘problem’ patients were fitted with etafilcon A (n=107) or nelfilcon A (n=128) DD-CLs and assessed 1-2 weeks later. The ‘problem’ Reusable CL wearers fitted with DD-CLs included 154 patients identified in Part 1 and 81 patients with objective signs of dry eye recruited in separate trials.
- **Patients:** Patients were between 18 and 45 years of age with a spherical refractive CL prescription between +0.00 and +6.00. Patients were enrolled in sites in the UK and North America.
- **Lenses:** Etafilcon A: 1-DAY ACUVUE® and 1-DAY ACUVUE® MOIST® were dispensed to 90 and 14 patients, respectively. Nelfilcon A: Focus® DAILIES® Aqua Release, Focus® DAILIES® Aqua Comfort plus and Focus® DAILIES® were dispensed to 46, 11 and 71 patients, respectively.
- **Statistical Analysis:** Baseline vs. follow-up results and etafilcon A vs. nelfilcon A data were compared using the SPSS software (v19, IBM). A P value of less than or equal to 0.05 was considered a significant difference.

**Discussion & Conclusions**

- **A high proportion of current soft Reusable CL wearers can be regarded as ‘problematic’ or ‘marginally successful based on specified criteria.**
- **Changing from Reusable to DD lenses, improved dryness and increased comfortable wearing time, indicating that DD lenses could be used as an alternative regime in order to alleviate these symptoms.**
- **The type of material and lens design was found to further affect lens performance.**
- **Etafilcon A lenses were more efficient in reducing symptoms of dryness and irritation in comparison to nelfilcon A lenses.**
- **The number of patients with clinically relevant hyperaemia was lower in the etafilcon A group compared to nelfilcon A-fitted patients, while no significant differences in the number of patients with corneal staining were noticed between the two groups.**
- **Patients fitted with etafilcon A lenses wore their lenses comfortably for longer during a period of time representing an average work day (8-12 hours of comfort) in comparison to nelfilcon A-fitted patients.**