



# Screen Time 2020 Report

Attitudes and opinions of employers and eye care providers  
about screen time and blue light





Amid COVID-19, screen time continues to increase and screens may be getting closer and closer to the eyes for many people. As many Americans work and learn from home, employees and students are spending an increasing amount of time in front of digital displays that emit potentially harmful levels of blue light.

Together with Eyesafe, a leader in screen time and blue light solutions, UnitedHealthcare Vision conducted a comprehensive survey on how both employers and eye care professionals are thinking about addressing the health challenges stemming from exposure to screens and blue light.

[eyesafe.com/uhc](https://eyesafe.com/uhc)



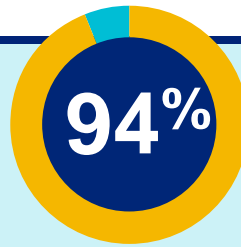
# Screen Time 2020 Overview

As many people spend more time on digital devices due to COVID-19, some eye care professionals and employers are becoming increasingly concerned about the potential health impacts of increased exposure to blue light.

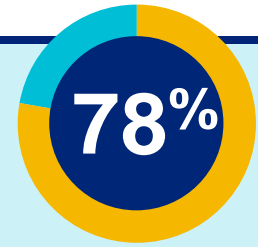


## 13+ hours

are spent on screens per day since COVID-19 emerged.<sup>1</sup>



of eye doctors are concerned.



of employers are concerned.

By offering blue light protective solutions, eye care providers believe the expected benefits most often cited include:



**Sleep improvement (71%)**



**Improve eye and vision care (69%)**



**Greater satisfaction with their overall care (56%)**

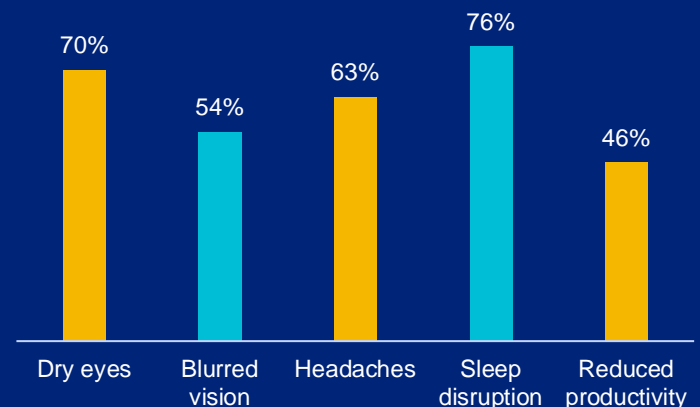


**Morale and mood increase (45%)**

**Over 77%** of employers want a specific insurance or benefit plan covering impacts of screen time.

**Nearly 8 in 10** eye care professionals estimate that blue light is impacting not only patients' eyes but their overall physical and mental health.

Symptoms most cited by eye care professionals as a result of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices include:



Employers and eye care professionals both identified the light sources presenting the most potential health issues for employees and patients:

- **Phones**
- **Notebook/desktop computers**

Source: Employer and Eye Care Provider Screen Time Survey 2020

<sup>1</sup> Eyesafe, 2020, <https://eyesafe.com/covid-19-screen-time-spike-to-over-13-hours-per-day>

[eyesafe.com/uhc](https://eyesafe.com/uhc)

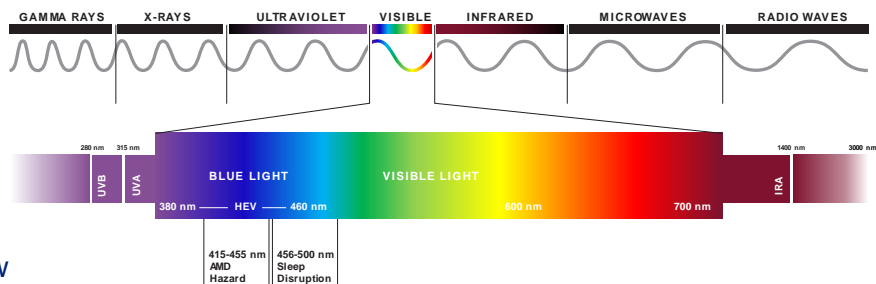


# Background

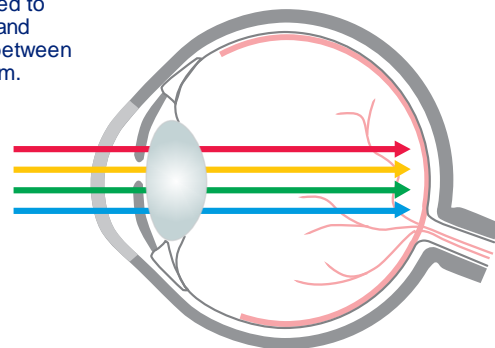
## What is Blue Light?

All digital devices, such as smartphones and computers, emit something called “blue light,” a low wavelength, high energy light that has the potential to damage the eyes over the long term.<sup>1</sup>

Although there are other sources of blue light that we’re exposed to on a regular basis (the sun also emits blue light), the particular concern with digital devices is two-fold: 1) People are often in close proximity to this technology, in some cases a handful of inches; 2) The prolonged exposure as people now spend an average of 13 hours per day on screens since COVID-19 emerged.<sup>2</sup> Children are a particular concern because their developing eyes absorb more blue light than adults, putting them at greater risk of damage.



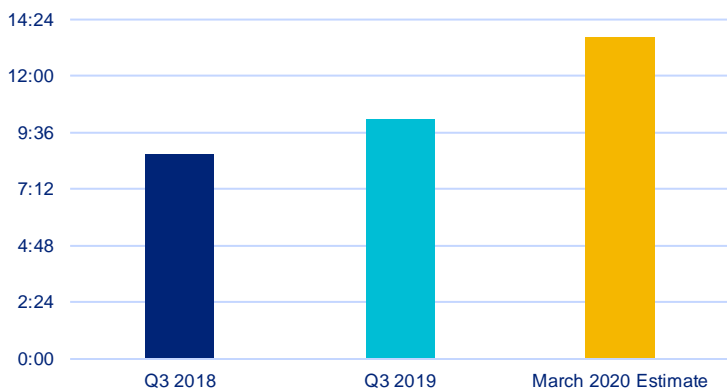
Visible light is transmitted to the retina from natural and artificial light sources, between the range of 400-700 nm.



**Digital device screens are often getting closer to our eyes.**



SCREEN TIME HOURS PER DAY, PER ADULT U.S. AVERAGE ESTIMATE



## Screen time is increasing amid COVID-19

Source: Nielsen Q3 2019 Total Audience Report. Nielsen Insights projects a 60% increase in TV/Game Console media and 14% increase in mobile and work-related devices.

<sup>1</sup> International Journal of Ophthalmology, 2018, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6288536>

<sup>2</sup> Eyesafe, 2020, <https://eyesafe.com/covid-19-screen-time-spike-to-over-13-hours-per-day>



# Background

## About the Survey

The Screen Time 2020 Report includes responses from employers and eye care providers related to screen time and blue light exposure. The goal of the report is to help inform the conversation around eye health and exposure to blue light, helping consumers, health care providers and employers make more informed decisions about this growing public health concern.



## Survey Methodology

The survey included responses from 157 eye care professionals, including optometrists, ophthalmologists and clinicians, and feedback from 500 employers, including representatives from small, medium and large organizations. The online surveys were complete in July 2020.

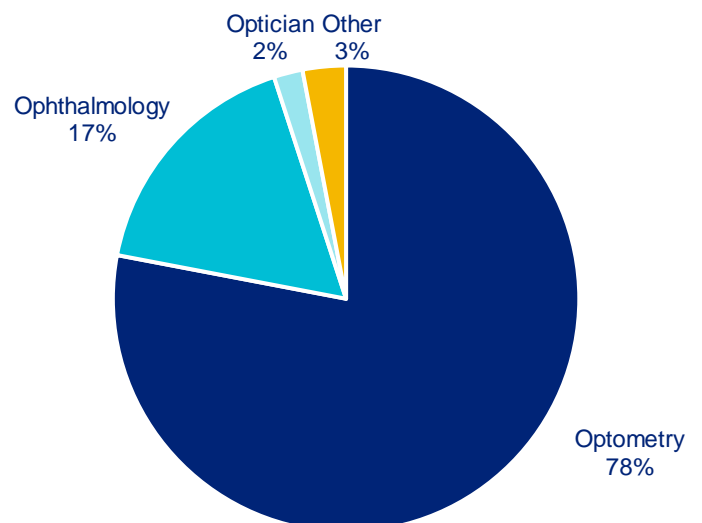


## Demographics of Eye Care Professional Survey:

- Career: 78% Optometry, 17% Ophthalmology, 2% Optician, 3% Other
- Responses received from all regions of the United States
- Sample Size: N=157 Respondents

## Demographics of Employer Survey:

- Career: Management, Small Business Owner
- 52% Male, 48% Female
- Responses received from all regions of the United States
- Sample Size: N=500 Respondents



# Employer Results Summary

1. 71% surveyed estimate employees spend at least 3 hours a day looking at device screens and nearly 10% estimate employees are on screens at least 12 hours a day.
2. 78% are “somewhat” to “very concerned” about the impact of digital device screen time on their and employees’ eyes and health and nearly half are “very concerned” and “concerned”.
3. Light sources identified as presenting the most potential health issues are phones (51%) and notebook/desktop computers (55%). Sunlight identified as the blue light source of least concern (25%).
4. Symptoms most cited as a result of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices include: 1) headaches (63%), 2) blurred vision (55%), 3) dry eyes (50%), 4) sleep disruption (36%), and 5) reduced productivity at work (32%).
5. 62% of respondents estimate 50% of employees or less are impacted by blue light-related symptoms and 12% estimate all employees are impacted.
6. 78% of respondents identified an insured vision benefit that includes solutions for employee screen exposure to computer device screens and blue light as “very attractive” to “somewhat attractive”.
7. 30% of respondents identified that blue light education and prevention is “very important to our overall wellness culture and we are or have plans to address”.
8. Eye exams ranked as the most important insured vision benefit by 69% of respondents.
9. Blue light protective solutions ranked as most important benefit enhancement by 53% of respondents.
10. By offering blue light protective solutions to employees, benefits most cited include: 1) improved eye and vision care (73%), 2) attention improvement (53%), and 3) greater satisfaction with their benefit package (49%).
11. 67% of employers reported interest in sharing with employees health and safety information about blue light.

# Eye Care Provider Results Summary

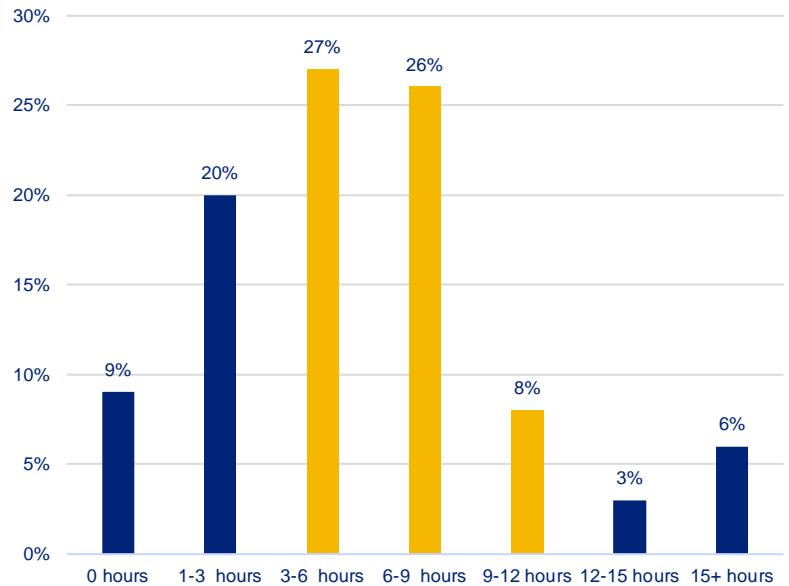
1. 94% of eye care professionals surveyed are “very concerned” to “somewhat concerned” about the impact of digital device screen time on their patient’s eyes.
2. Light sources identified as presenting the most potential health issues are phones (65%) and notebook/desktop computers (61%). Television identified as the blue light source of least concern (12%).
3. Symptoms most cited as a result of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices include: 1) sleep disruption (76%), 2) dry eyes (70%), 3) headaches (63%), 4) blurred vision (54%), and 5) reduced productivity at work (46%).
4. 83% of respondents estimate that up to 75% of patients are impacted by blue light-related symptoms.
5. 67% of respondents agree that employers should be providing blue light protective solutions for employees.
6. 80% of respondents estimate that given the current climate and growth in screen usage, blue light is impacting patients’ eyes and overall health.
7. 72% of eye care professionals surveyed agree that blue light education and prevention is “important” or “very important” to address in the workplace or benefits package.
8. 83% of respondents agree that an insured vision benefit that includes solutions for employee exposure to computer device blue light as “very important” to “somewhat important”.
9. By offering blue light protective solutions, expected benefits most cited include: 1) sleep improvement (71%), 2) improved eye and vision care (69%), 3) greater satisfaction with their overall care (56%), and 4) morale and mood increase (45%).
10. Information identified as most helpful to share with patients includes: 1) research on blue light and screen time (77%), 2) product solutions for blue light and screen time (70%), and 3) potential health risks (65%).
11. In a range of 1-10 with 1 “not often” and 10 “often”, the topic of screen time and blue light was identified to come up as an average of 5.5.
12. In a range of 1-10 with 1 “not knowledgeable” and 10 “very knowledgeable”, the level of knowledge on screen time and blue light product solutions is 6.4.



# Employer Survey Results

## Screen Time Per Day

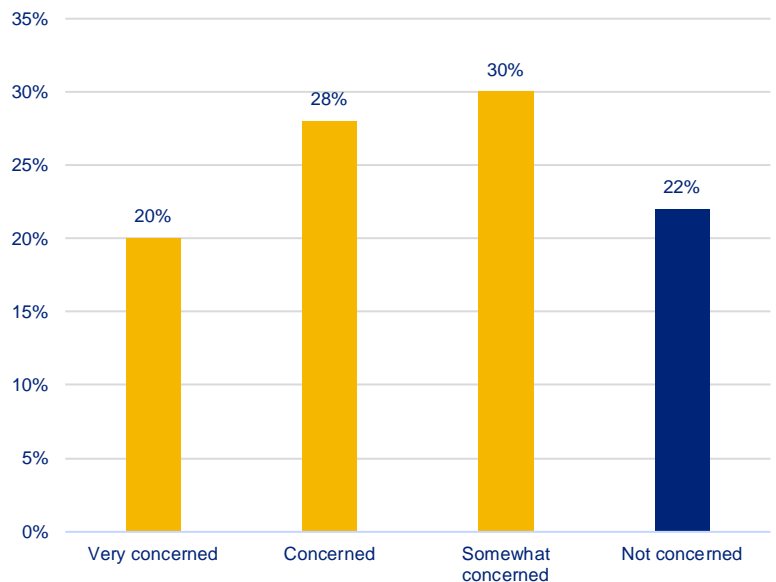
71% of employers surveyed estimate that employees spend at least 3 hours a day looking at device screens and nearly 10% estimate employees are on screens at least 12 hours a day.



**Q1.** How many hours a day would you estimate your employees spend looking at a device screen of any kind (monitor, laptop, smart phone, tablet, TV)?

## Level of Concern

78% are “somewhat” to “very concerned” about the impact of digital device screen time on their and employees’ eyes and health and nearly half “very concerned” and “concerned”.



**Q2.** How concerned are you about the impact of digital device screen time on your and your employees’ eyes and health?





# Employer Survey Results

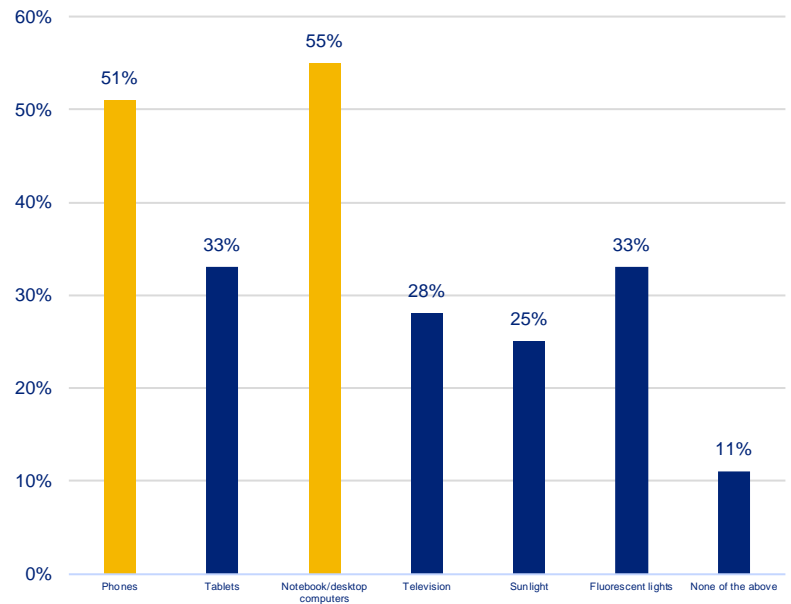
## Light Sources of Most Concern

Light sources identified as presenting the most potential problems are:

- 1) Notebook/desktop computers (55%)
- 2) Phones (51%)

Light source identified as presenting the least concern:

- 1) Sunlight (25%)
- 2) Television (28%)

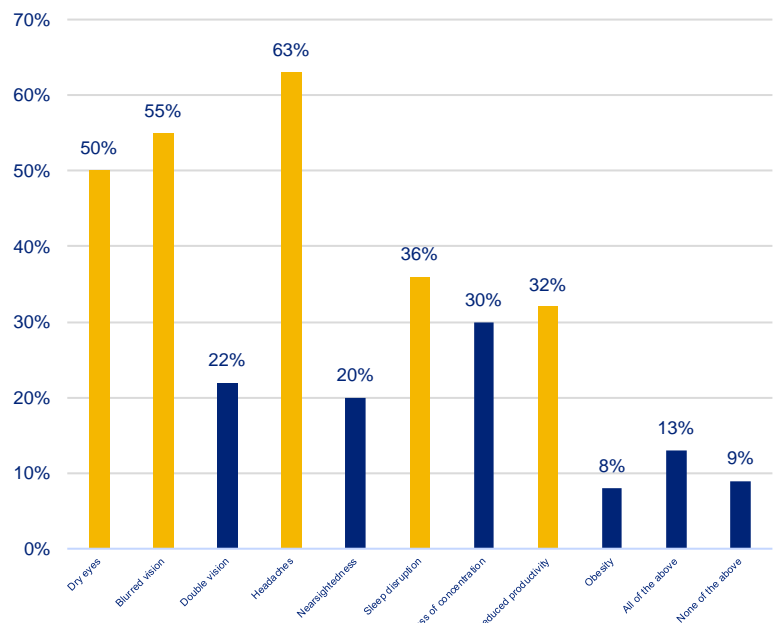


**Q3.** Which light sources do you think present the most potential health issues to your employees? (Check all that apply)

## Most Cited Symptoms of Excessive Exposure

Symptoms most frequently cited due to excessive exposure to digital devices include:

- 1) Headaches (63%)
- 2) Blurred vision (55%)
- 3) Dry eyes (50%)
- 4) Sleep disruption (36%)
- 5) Reduced productivity at work (32%)



**Q4.** Which of the following do you believe are symptoms of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices? (Check all that apply)

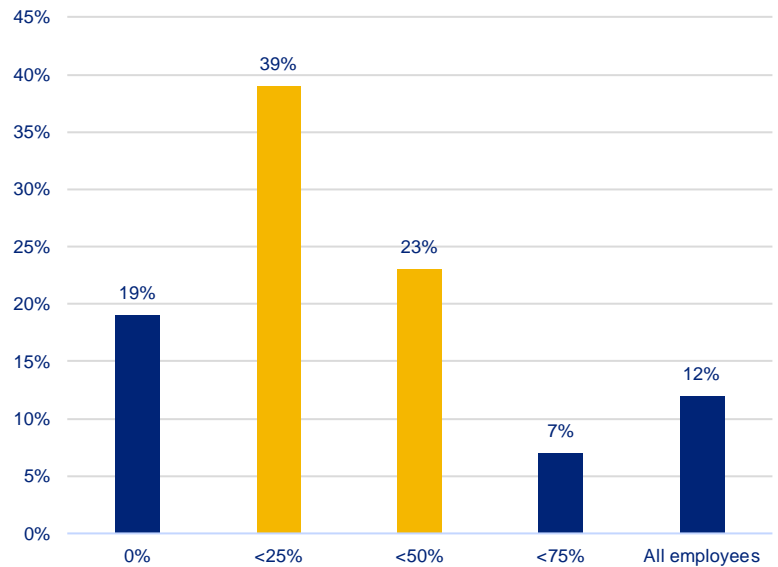


# Employer Survey Results

## Percentage Impacted

62% of respondents estimate that up to half of employees are impacted by blue light-related symptoms.

Nearly 12% estimate that all employees experience blue light-related symptoms.

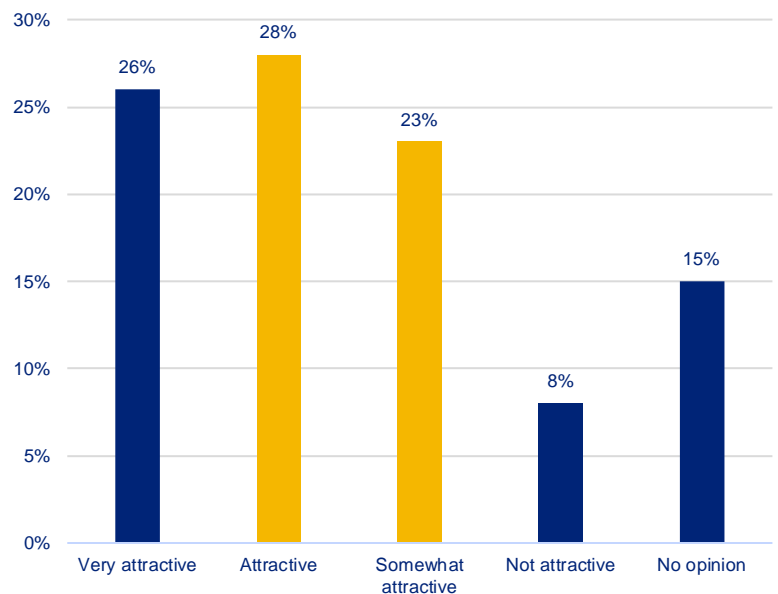


**Q5.** What percentage of your employees do you believe are affected by blue light-related symptoms? (0-100%)

## Interest in Insured Vision Benefit

78% of respondents consider an insured vision benefit with coverage for blue light-related solutions is "very attractive" to "somewhat attractive".

54% consider such a benefit as "very attractive" to "attractive".



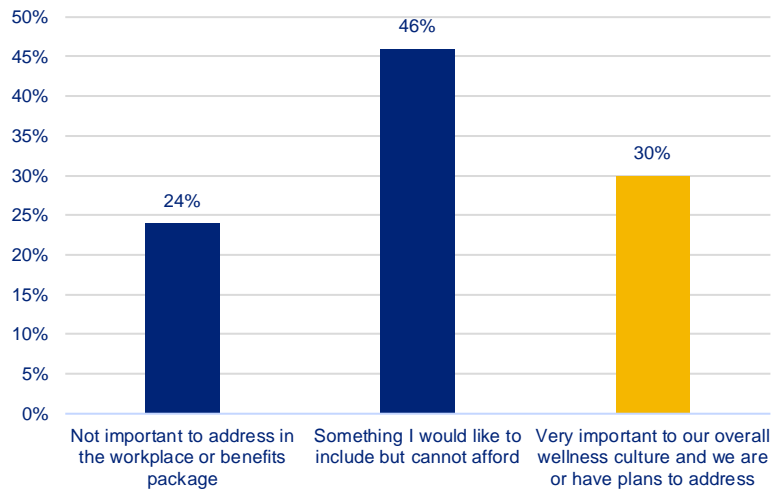
**Q6.** How attractive is an insured vision benefit that includes solutions for employee exposure to computer device screens and blue light?



# Employer Survey Results

## Wellness Culture and Blue Light

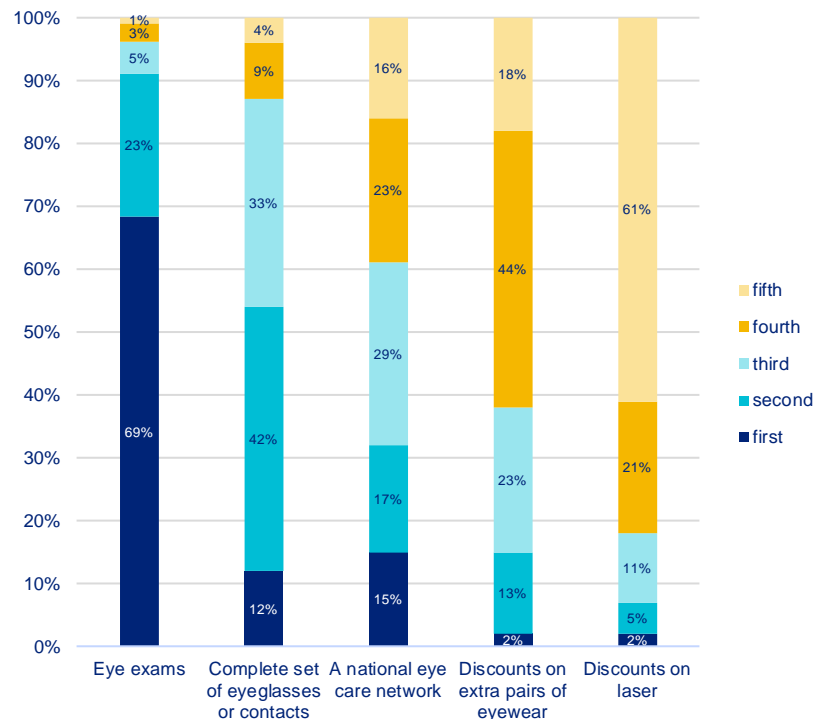
30% of respondents consider education and prevention related to blue light to be "very important" to overall culture of well-being.



**Q7.** Considering your multiple priorities and challenges in providing a comprehensive and competitive employee benefits package – where does the blue light education and prevention rank?

## Importance of Insured Vision Benefits

Nearly 69% rank eye exams as the most important insured vision benefit.



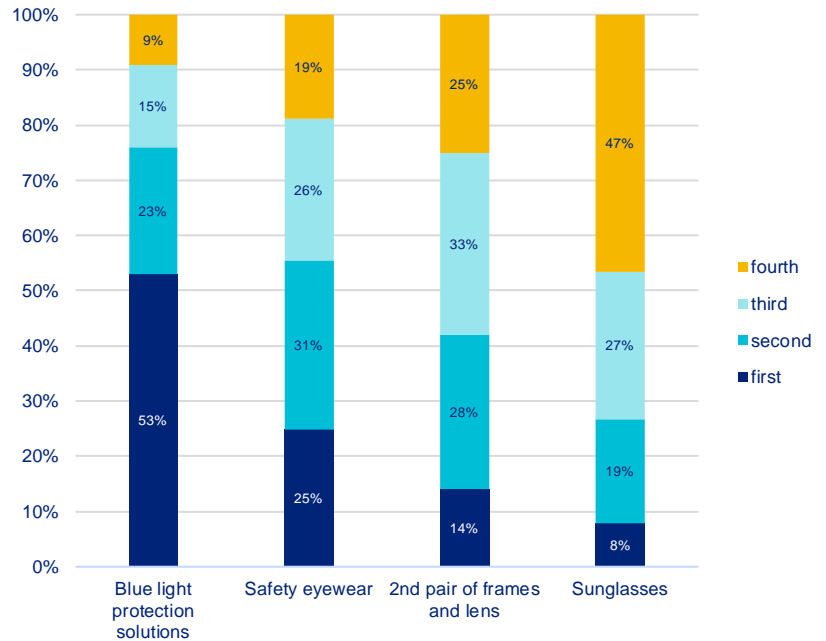
**Q8.** Please rank order your interest when evaluating insured vision benefits for your employees: (Rank 1 to 5)



# Employer Survey Results

## Importance of Insured Vision Benefit Enhancements

Nearly 53% ranked blue light-related solutions as the most important vision benefit enhancement.

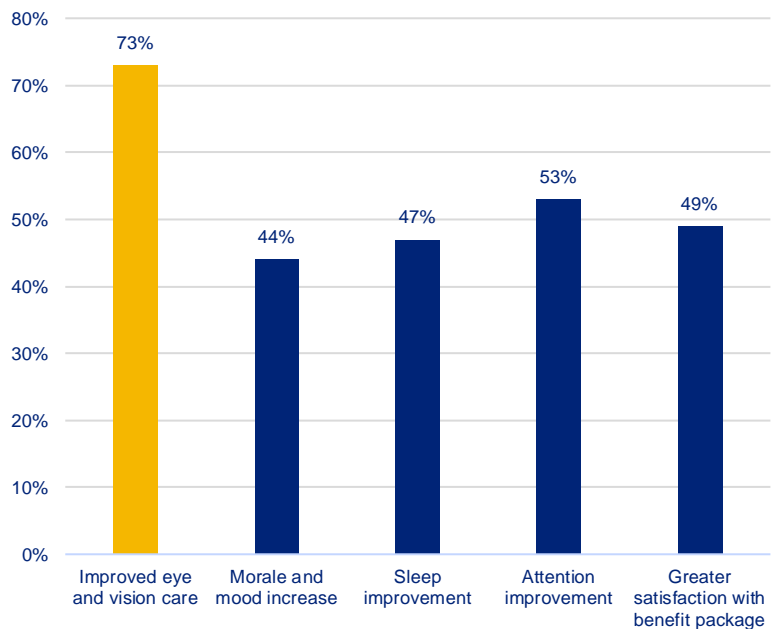


**Q9.** Please rank order, by importance, insured vision benefit enhancements that would benefit your employees most:

## Potential Benefit of Blue Light Solutions

By offering blue light protective solutions to employees:

- 1) 73% of employers expect improved eye and vision care
- 2) 53% expect attention improvement
- 3) 49% expect greater satisfaction with their benefit package



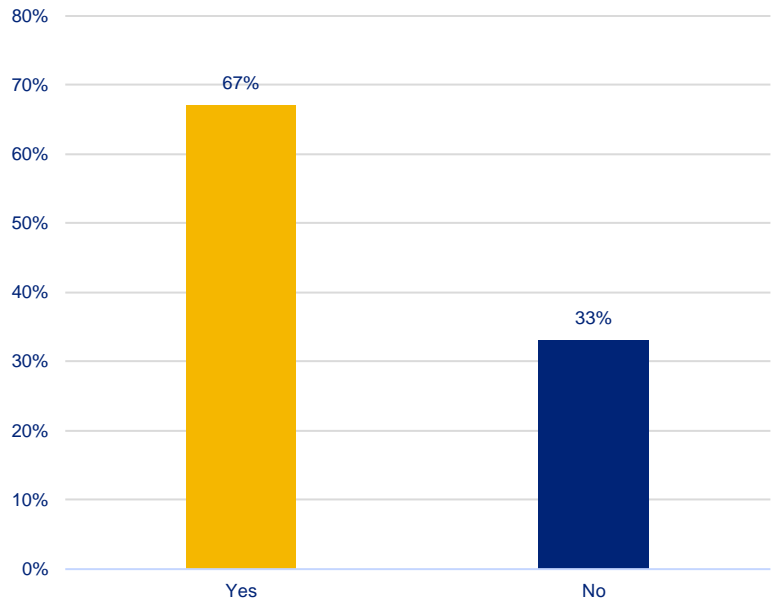
**Q10.** By offering blue light protective solutions to your employees, what benefits would you expect? (Check all that apply)



# Employer Survey Results

## Information About Screen Time

67% of employers reported interest in sharing with employees health and safety information about blue light.

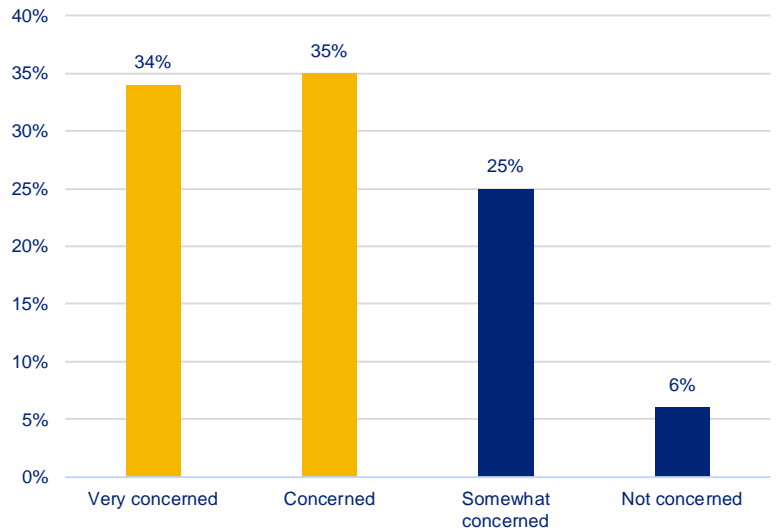


**Q11.** Would you be interested in screen time health safety and productivity information to share with your employees? (Y/N)

# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Level of Concern

94% of eye care professionals surveyed are “very concerned” to “somewhat concerned” about the impact of digital device screen time on their patient’s eyes.



**Q.** How concerned are you about the impact of digital device screen time on your patients’ eyes?

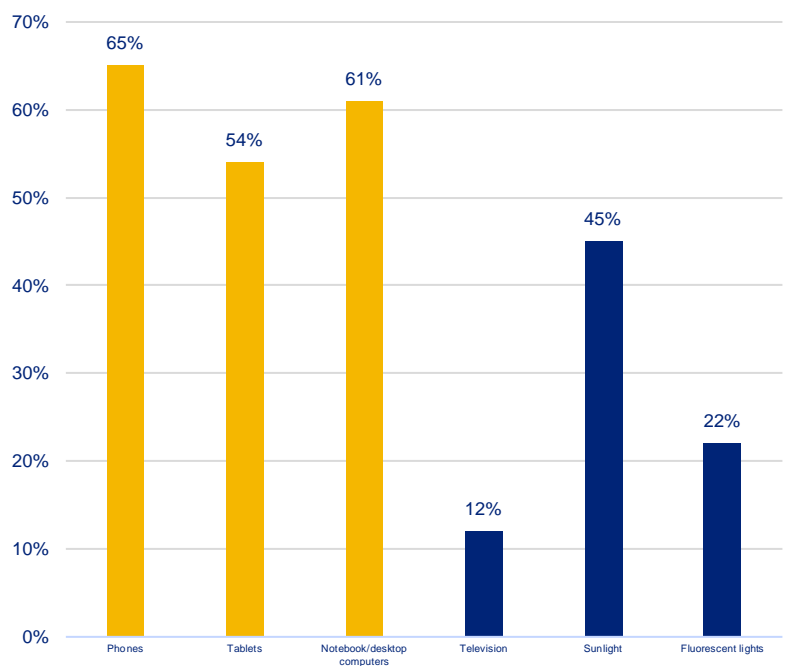
## Light Sources of Most Concern

Light sources identified as presenting the most potential problems are:

- 1) Phones (65%)
- 2) Notebook/desktop computers (61%)

Light sources identified as presenting the least concern:

- 1) Television (12%)
- 2) Fluorescent lights (22%)



**Q.** Which light sources do you think present the most potential health issues to your patients? (Check all that apply)

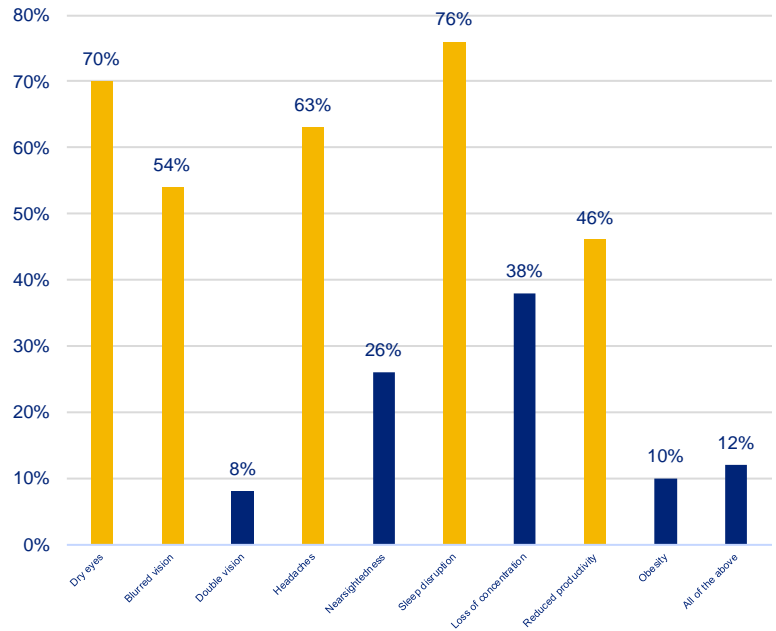


# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Most Cited Symptoms of Excessive Exposure

Symptoms most frequently cited due to excessive exposure to digital devices include:

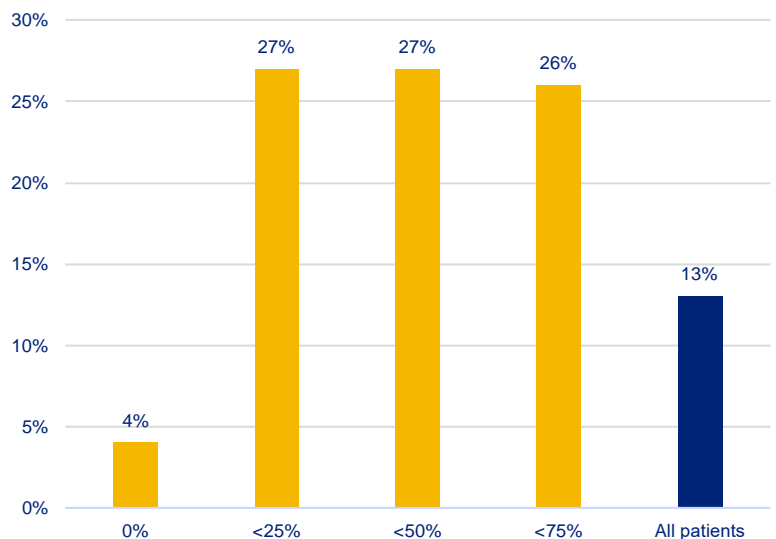
- 1) Sleep disruption (76%)
- 2) Dry eyes (70%)
- 3) Headaches (63%)
- 4) Blurred vision (54%)
- 5) Reduced productivity at work (46%)



**Q.** Which of the following do you believe are symptoms of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices? (Check all that apply)

## Percentage Impacted

83% of respondents estimate that up to 75% of patients are impacted by blue light-related symptoms.



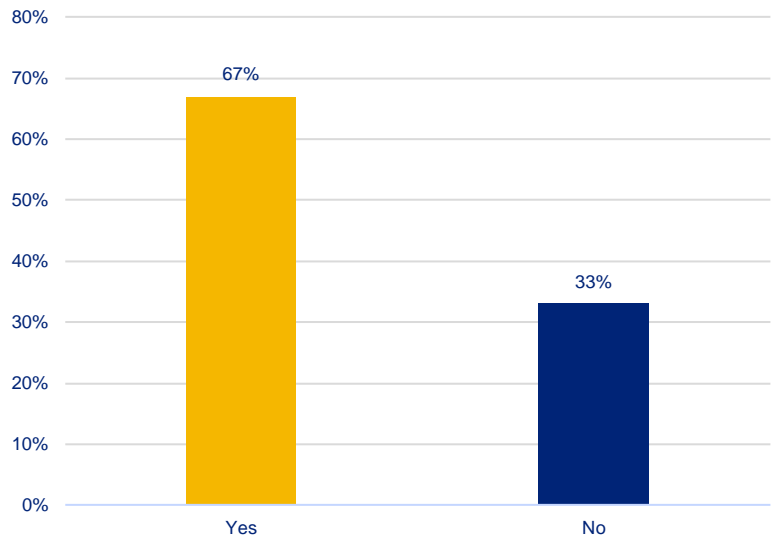
**Q.** What percentage of your patients do you believe are affected by blue light-related symptoms? (0-100%)



# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Employer Blue Light Protection to Employees

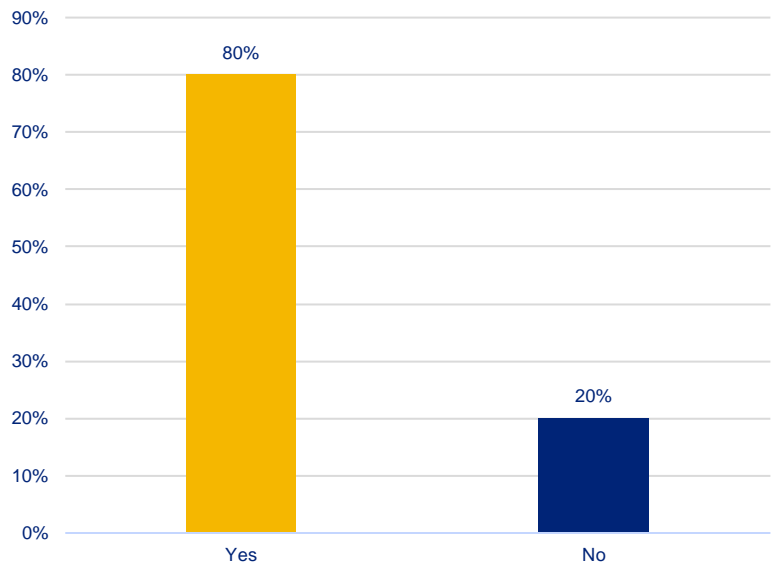
67% of respondents agreed that employers should be providing blue light protective solutions for employees.



**Q.** Do you believe employers should be providing blue light protective solutions for employees?

## COVID-19 and Screen Time Health Impact

80% of respondents estimate that given the current climate and growth in screen usage, blue light is impacting patients' eyes and overall health.



**Q.** Given the current climate and growth in screen usage, do you believe that increased screen time and blue light exposure is having an impact on eye and overall health?

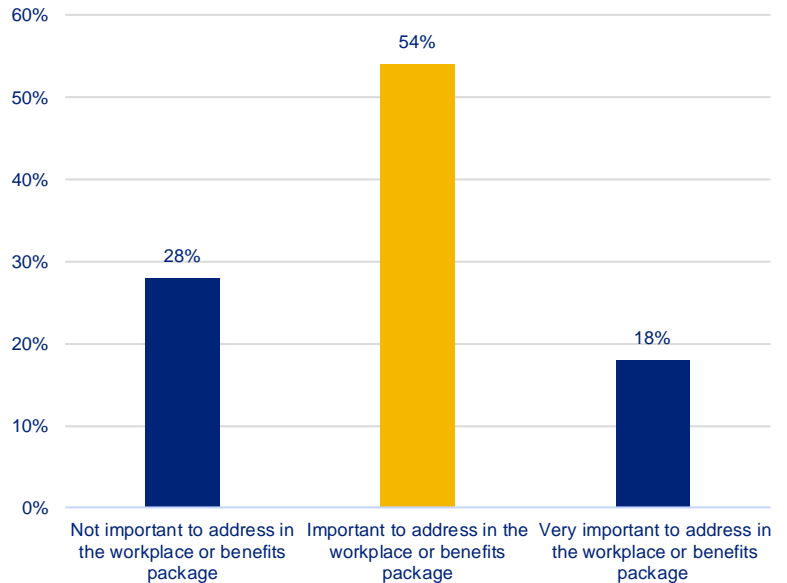




# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Interest in Insured Vision Benefit

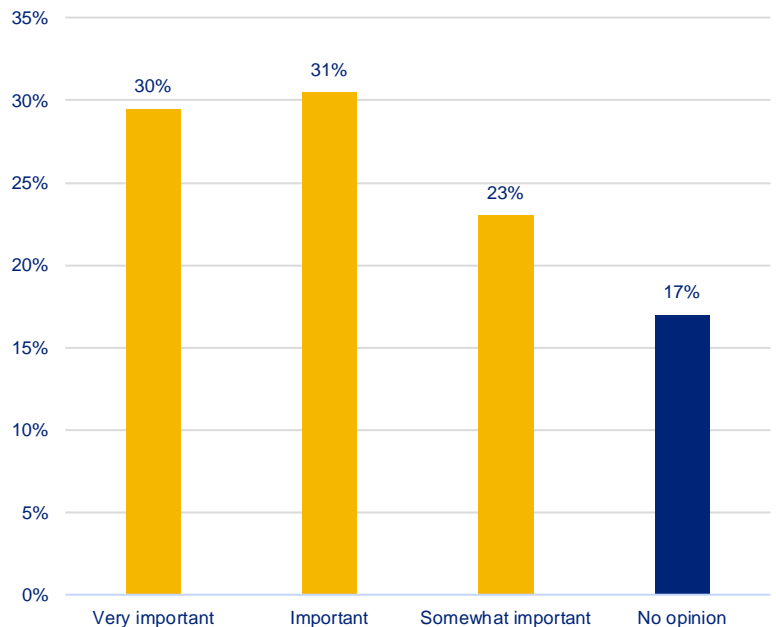
72% of eye care professionals surveyed agree that blue light education and prevention is “important” or “very important” to address in the workplace or benefits package.



**Q.** For employers and among the workplace, where do you think the topic of screen time and Blue Light education and prevention ranks?

## Importance of Blue Light Insured Vision Benefit

83% of respondents agree that an insured vision benefit that includes solutions for employee exposure to computer device blue light as “very important” to “somewhat important”.



**Q.** How important is an insured vision benefit that includes solutions for employee exposure to computer device screens and blue light?

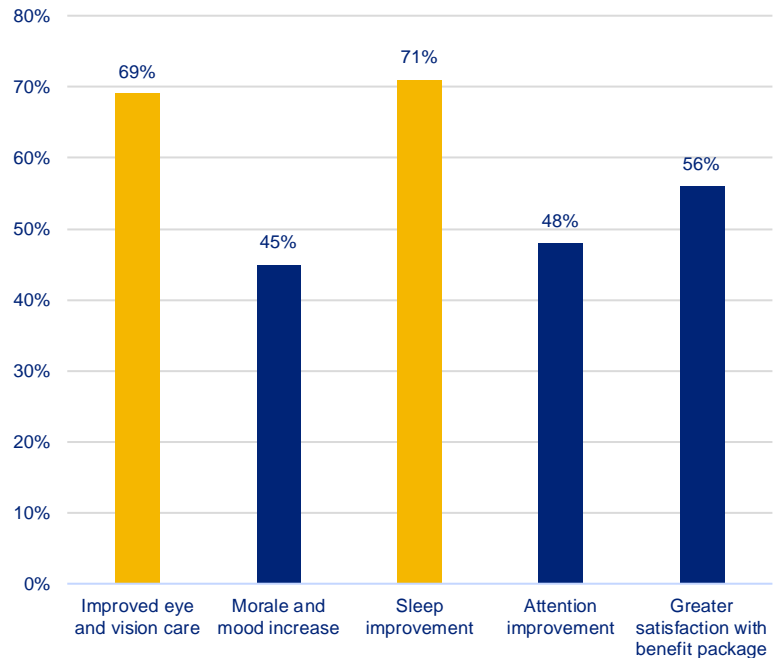


# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Potential Benefits to Blue Light Solutions

By offering blue light protective solutions:

- 1) 71% of eye care providers expect sleep improvement
- 2) 69% expect improved eye and vision care
- 3) 56% expect greater satisfaction with their overall care
- 4) 45% expect increased morale and mood

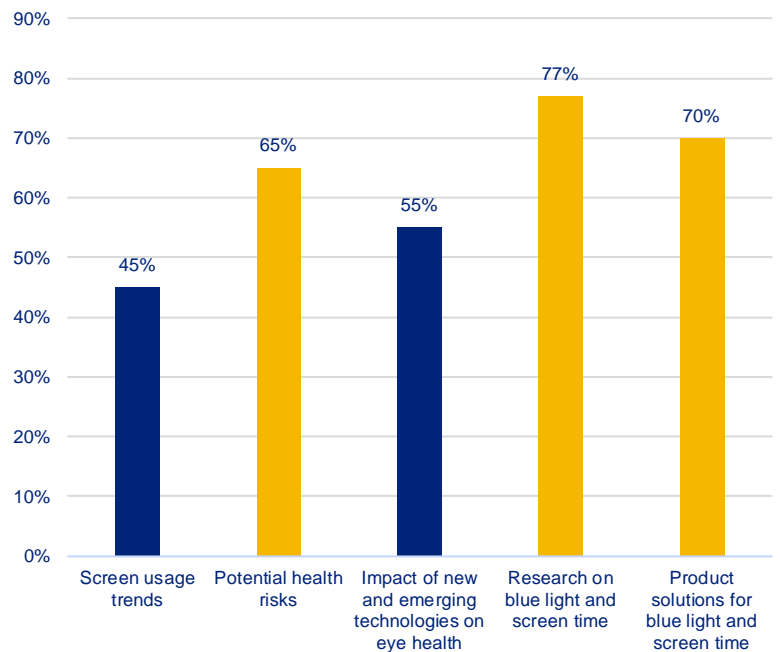


**Q.** By providing blue light protective solutions, what benefits would you expect? (Check all that apply)

## Information About Screen Time

Information identified as most helpful to share with patients includes:

- 1) Research on blue light and screen time (77%)
- 2) Product solutions for blue light and screen time (70%)
- 3) Potential health risks (65%)



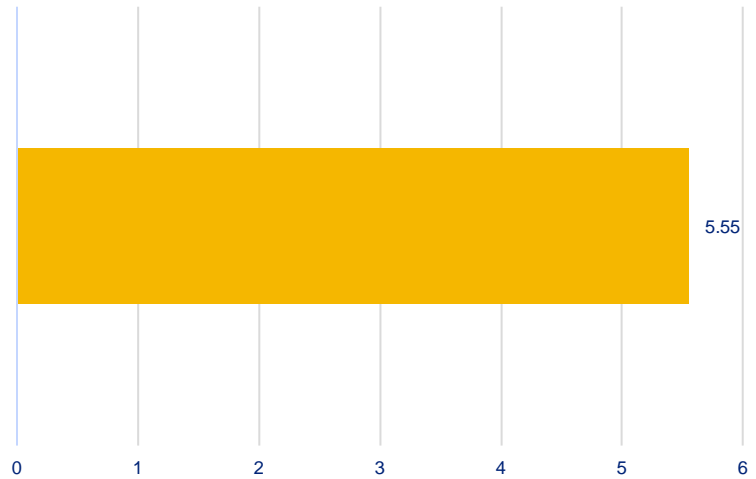
**Q.** What type of information would be most helpful to share with your patients?



# Eye Care Provider Survey Results

## Topic of Screen Time with Patients

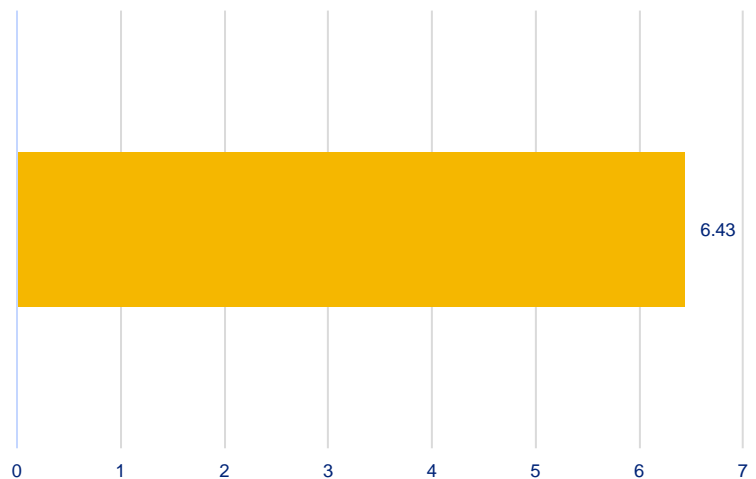
In a range of 1-10 with 1 “not often” and 10 “often”, the topic of screen time and blue light was identified to come up as an average of 5.5.



Q. How often does the topic of screen time and blue light come up with your patient interaction?

## Knowledge of Screen Time and Solutions

In a range of 1-10 with 1 “not knowledgeable” and 10 “very knowledgeable”, the level of knowledge on screen time and blue light product solutions is 6.4.



Q. What would you say is your level of knowledge on screen time and blue light product solutions in the market?





United  
Healthcare®

eyesafe®