



THE VISION CARE  
INSTITUTE™

of  
*Johnson & Johnson* Vision Care, Inc.

For further information, contact:

Gary Esterow, Vistakon  
908-216-5200  
[gester1@visus.jnj.com](mailto:gester1@visus.jnj.com)

Mai-Lise Nguyen, Weber Shandwick  
212-445-8125  
[mnguyen@webershandwick.com](mailto:mnguyen@webershandwick.com)

## AMERICANS ARE OUT OF FOCUS ON PROPER VISION CARE

### **New Nationwide Survey Reveals Cultural Variances in Vision Care Knowledge and Practice**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (September 12, 2006) – While most Americans visit their doctor annually and their dentist twice a year, a new survey shows that many adults do not prioritize, for themselves or their children, two of their most vital body parts – their eyes. The survey also reveals alarming statistics that demonstrate among certain ethnic groups, a gap between vision care knowledge and behavior, which may be preventing those who are at the greatest risk of certain eye conditions from seeking proper treatment and diagnosis.

More than nine out of 10 respondents (94 percent) agree that maintaining proper vision is an important priority to them and three-quarters (74 percent) agree that taking care of their eyes is as important as other health issues, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Yet, 14 percent say they do not have a regular eye care professional and one-quarter (25 percent) say it has been more than two years since their last eye exam. Further, one-third (35 percent) of parents report that their child has never seen an eye care professional.

More than 3,700 adults of varying ethnic backgrounds (Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Caucasians) expressed their attitudes toward, perceptions of, and experiences with vision care in the nationwide *Americans' Attitudes and Perceptions About Vision Care* survey, which was conducted by Harris Interactive® on behalf of The Vision Care Institute™ of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc.

“While the survey reveals a great deal of similarities and common beliefs about vision care among people of different ethnic backgrounds, it’s also a cause for concern because adults and children who are at greater risk for certain eye conditions and diseases are not receiving proper diagnosis and treatment,” says Derrick Artis, O.D., Director, Professional Affairs, Vistakon®, Division of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc. “Early detection and treatment of vision and eye health issues can help lessen or prevent permanent visual impairment.”

Among groups surveyed, African-Americans were most likely to strongly agree that maintaining proper vision is an important priority (72 percent) and that taking care of their eyes is as important as other health issues (50 percent). However, African-Americans were most likely to report that they do not have a regular eye care professional (21 percent).

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More than one in four (27 percent) Hispanic respondents strongly agreed that they are very concerned about their vision getting worse, compared with only 15 percent of all respondents. Despite concerns about worsening vision, Hispanics were least likely to have seen an eye care professional in the last year (43 percent).

More than nine out of 10 Asian-Americans (94 percent) agreed that maintaining proper vision is an important priority, but more than a third (36 percent) said that they do not need an eye exam unless they are having a vision problem. Asian-Americans were also the least likely of groups surveyed to believe that vision correction will greatly improve activities such as driving, work performance, reading performance, and computer work.

Caucasians were more likely to report knowing exactly what certain common vision problems are, including myopia (79 percent) and presbyopia (34 percent). Despite a majority of Caucasians believing that people should get their eyes examined at least annually (71 percent), one-quarter (25 percent) have not seen an eye care professional in the past two years.

“Like many diseases, vision problems can disproportionately affect certain ethnic groups. For example, African-Americans are five times more likely to have glaucoma, Hispanics are at the greatest risk for cataracts, and myopia or nearsightedness is much more common among Asians than other ethnic groups,” adds Dr. Dan Desrivieres, president, National Optometric Association, a leading optometry group dedicated to the delivery of effective and efficient eye and vision care services to the minority community. “Seeing an eye care professional regularly may not only assess your vision and need for updated prescriptions, it may also help identify and lead to a diagnosis of other health concerns such as hypertension and diabetes.”

Other findings from the survey, which evaluated a variety of vision care attitudes and practices included the following:

- The most commonly reported diagnosed and/or treated conditions among respondents were myopia/nearsightedness (47 percent), bifocal vision (35 percent), and astigmatism (31 percent).
- Women were significantly more likely than men to report being diagnosed and/or treated as nearsighted (51 percent vs. 42 percent). Myopia/nearsightedness (18 percent) was the vision condition most commonly diagnosed among respondents' children.
- Only 38 percent of those 40 and older know exactly what presbyopia (gradual loss of the eye's ability to change focus to see near objects) is, and just over half (53 percent) of those 40 and older know that there are available treatments for the condition.
- Four out of five (78 percent) adults wear some kind of vision correction; 67 percent wear prescription glasses; 16 percent wear contact lenses and 10 percent wear non-prescription (i.e., reading) glasses.
- One out of ten (11 percent) respondents wear both prescription eyeglasses and contact lenses. Six-in-ten (62 percent) respondents who wear both prescription glasses and contact lenses say they wear their contact lenses more often than their glasses. One-quarter (28 percent) wear their glasses more often.
- Almost all respondents (98 percent) agreed that ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage their eyes. However, one-third (33 percent) mistakenly believed that sunglasses alone can protect their eyes from UV ray damage. Caucasians (78 percent) were significantly more likely to say they wear sunglasses than Asian-Americans (66 percent), Hispanics (65 percent), and African-Americans (54 percent).

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### **About the Survey**

*Americans' Attitudes and Perceptions About Vision Care* was conducted online and by telephone within the United States from March 8 – March 27, 2006 by Harris Interactive® on behalf of The Vision Care Institute™ of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc. The survey queried a nationally representative cross section of 3,716 adults aged 18 and older. To ensure a sufficient number of cases for subgroup analyses and comparisons between minority respondents and other respondents, Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans were over sampled. A total of 690 Hispanics, 676 African-Americans, 686 Asian-Americans and 1,566 Caucasians completed the survey. The data for each ethnic group (Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Caucasians) were weighted to represent the general population of each sub-group. For data that includes all ethnic sub-groups a post-weight was applied which restored percentages of each race/ethnicity to their general population proportion.

The survey was designed to comply with the code and standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). The category names – Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian – are not intended to imply or conform to any biological, anthropological, geographic or genetic criteria – they are based entirely upon how survey respondents have chosen to classify themselves.

### **About The Vision Care Institute**

The Vision Care Institute™ of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc. is an innovative professional resource for optometry students and recent graduates. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, the state-of-the-art facility gives participants a rare opportunity to experience the latest in vision diagnostic and treatment technologies through hands-on instruction.

Working in tandem with leading optometry schools and colleges since its launch in March 2004, The Vision Care Institute has hosted more than 1,000 students from all 19 of the schools and colleges of optometry throughout North America. The Vision Care Institute's sister facilities in Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, and Prague offer eye care specialists around the world an opportunity to learn of new developments in the field under the leadership of top contact lens specialists.

For more information, please visit [www.thevisioncareinstitute.com](http://www.thevisioncareinstitute.com).

### **About Harris Interactive**

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