



VISIONquest 20/20

Because Every Child Deserves To See

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For Immediate Release

COULD VIDEO GAMES BE GOOD FOR VISION?

Public Health Crisis: Undetected amblyopia may lead to blindness; new technology detects vision problems early.

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Feb. 13, 2013) – Undetected vision disorders may be a silent epidemic impacting children and could affect their ability to learn, and in some cases result in permanent visual loss. Identifying children with vision problems is essential, yet not all children receive screenings. Traditional vision screening methods haven't changed significantly in more than 100 years. A lack of sufficient number of skilled personnel to administer millions of screenings may result in some children being overlooked.

In response to what some are calling a public health dilemma, children's eye surgeon, James O'Neil, M.D. and technology developer Richard Tirendi created EyeSpy 20/20™. EyeSpy 20/20 is a video game that takes a child on a virtual treasure hunt during which they may wear eye patches or a pair of colored glasses. Designed to make the vision screenings fun, it uses intelligent software protocols that measure the child's responses to customize the testing in real time. The result is a vision screening assessment that mimics the results of a trained specialist even when administered by a parent or untrained volunteers.¹

From the beginning, the founders recognized that changing a public health model through the use of technology was an enormous undertaking. VisionQuest 20/20 was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to facilitate the collaborations with vision experts, schools, parent groups, foundations, and government agencies.

Vision experts agree that early detection of vision problems in children is critical.

Vision screenings are the most cost-effective way to detect vision problems in children, and it is estimated there is a five to tenfold return on investment for every dollar spent.² As compared to traditional vision screenings, EyeSpy 20/20 may reduce the cost by half.

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¹ Journal of American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

Title: A pilot study evaluating the use of EyeSpy 20/20™ video game software to perform vision screening in school-aged children
Volume: 14, Issue 4, August 2010, Pages 311-316

Authors: Rupal H. Trivedi, M. Edward Wilson, M. Millicent Peterseim, Kali B. Cole, Ronald G.W. Teed

² Binocular Vision & Strabismus Quarterly.

Title: The economic value added (EVA) resulting from medical care of functional amblyopia, strabismus, (pathologies of binocular vision) and asthma.

Volume: 25, Issue 4, 2010, Pages 206-216

Authors: Beauchamp CL, Felius J, Beauchamp GR.

By screening for visual acuity and depth perception, the EyeSpy 20/20 game screens for all the important childhood vision disorders. These include amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (eye misalignment), cataracts, and focusing problems (nearsightedness, extreme farsightedness, and astigmatism). For preverbal children or those with special needs who are not able to play the game, the program integrates with other validated technologies.

EyeSpy 20/20 requires minimal training to administer. The software generates a printout of the student's results at the end of testing and recommends whether additional follow-up with an eye doctor is needed.

“Automated testing ensures consistent and standardized test administration, eliminates the need for large networks of trained personnel, minimizes costs, and facilitates data collection necessary for reporting test results and epidemiological analysis,” explains Tirendi. “By integrating recent advances in computer, Internet, and video game technology, it is possible to solve our nation's vision screening dilemma.”

Schools have used EyeSpy 20/20 to screen more than 160,000 students to date. School nurse Lucy Samuels said, “EyeSpy 20/20 was very easy to use and accurate in identifying children in need of vision correction. The student that I was most impressed with received his glasses and looked up in the sky and said, ‘There's an airplane. I have never seen a airplane!’ It was so rewarding to hear.”

“Working with VisionQuest 20/20 is in many ways an extension of what I do everyday as a children's eye doctor,” says Dr. O'Neil.

“My goal is to help make certain children can see. The difference is, instead of interacting with one child at a time, VisionQuest 20/20's program allows me to impact the lives of children on a much more significant scale.”

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About VisionQuest 20/20

VisionQuest 20/20 is a nonprofit organization focused on a major public health issue. Founded by pediatric ophthalmologist James O'Neil, M.D. and leading technology developer Richard Tirendi, the idea started as a concept, whereby children could get their vision tested while playing a videogame. With EyeSpy 20/20™, schools can screen children by having them play a fun and interactive video game that detects vision problems more accurately and reliably when there is still time for corrective action. EyeSpy 20/20 data is easily incorporated into data management systems used by school health professionals to track and monitor health records of students and determine whether screenings have resulted in required examination and follow-up care. VisionQuest 20/20 is committed to working with other technology providers and non-profit organizations to cross-collaborate on bringing high technology solutions to vision screenings. For more information visit: <http://www.visionquest2020.org> or call 888-MY-VQ2020.

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