



### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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## Demographics and Ocular Infection Frequency of the Patients Who Applied to Secondary Public Hospital Before and After Covid 19 Pandemic

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Dear Editor,

In this letter to the editor, it was aimed to compare the demographics and ocular infection frequencies of the patients who applied to a secondary state hospital during 2019 and 2020. The medical records of 5902 patients who applied in 2019 and 2020 were retrospectively reviewed and the results were analyzed using SPSS 23. While 5428 (2778 females, 2658 males) patients applied in the year before pandemic, 474 patients (358 females, 156 males) applied in 2020. The incidence of patients with ocular infection was 15.3 % in 2019 whereas it was 19.1 % in 2020, The difference was statistically significant ( $p=0.010$ , Pearson chi square) In Figure 1, it is shown that the incidence of ocular infection , allergic conjunctivitis glaucoma and dry eye increased. The incidence of patients with refractive errors decreased.

According to the results, the applications in pandemic period decreased by 91 percent as a result of restrictions and precautions during the pandemic period. The incidence of ocular infections and glaucoma may have increased due to the marked decrease in applications of patients with less urgent complaints. The increase in allergic complaints and dry eye may be attributed to both mask use during the pandemic and the increased use of smartphones, tablets and online education. In a recent

study, a corresponding increase in ocular irritation and dryness among regular mask users was observed during the pandemic period. (1)

	2019	2020	P value*
Diagnosis	Incidence%	Incidence %	
Allergic conjunctivitis	%7,2	%17,9	<0,05
Blepharoconjunctivitis and keratitis	%13,2	%15,3	>0,05
Others	%1,3	%2,8	<0,05
Hordeolum	%1,4	%2,1	>0,05
Dry eye	%12,7	%33,4	<0,05
Nasolacrimal duct obstruction and dacryocystitis	%0,5	%1,8	<0,05
Refraction error	%61,7	%18,4	<0,05
Glaucoma	% 2,1	%8,4	<0,05

In conclusion, the pandemic and the related restrictions , precautions have changed the application rates of patients. The applications of less urgent patients have markedly decreased. The incidence of ocular infection and glaucoma increased since these were mostly emergency related cases.

### References

1. Moshirfar M, West WB Jr, Marx DP. Face Mask-Associated Ocular Irritation and Dryness. *Ophthalmol Ther.* 2020 ;9(3):397-400

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