

The effect of wearing yellow or blue filters on reading and spelling ability

Submission date 16/12/2014	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 08/05/2015	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 12/06/2020	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Up to half of all children with reading problems find it difficult to see text clearly. Letters appear to blur, glare, go double or move around, and these problems can give them headaches. Previous research has shown that these problems may be due to the poor readers having reduced sensitivity to time varying low-level visual stimuli, for example, moving dots. This sensitivity is important for making visual targets appear stationary despite eye movements and it is controlled by a system of large specialised (magnocellular) neurones in the brain. The development of these neurones have been found to be impaired in many children with reading problems. There are good physiological reasons for supposing that viewing text through either simple blue or yellow coloured filters may improve magnocellular function. We have found that indeed this is so, and that the use of these filters is often followed by rapid reading and spelling progress. However, these claims have been disputed. There is no agreement about whether coloured filters can really help more than a placebo. Here, we will test if simple and cheap blue or yellow filters can really help children with reading difficulties. If so, this low cost technique should be used wherever appropriate, in order to help the 10–20% of primary school children who have great difficulties learning to read.

Who can participate?

Children experiencing reading difficulties

What does the study involve?

The carers of all potential participants attending Dyslexia Research Trust (DRT) clinics are asked to allow their child to take part in the research. The only difference from the routine assessments carried out in the clinics is that each child is treated with blue, grey and then yellow filters in a random order. Upon arrival at the DRT, we discuss the study with them, ensure that both the child and carer understand why we are doing the study, what we hope to find, what will be expected of them and ask them to sign a consent form. Psychometric assessments (pen and paper tests) are carried out along with a visual assessment, clinical tests of vision and recordings of the movement of eyes. Following completion of these tests each child is given an envelope containing either yellow, grey or blue filters. This envelope is not to be opened until they leave the clinic to ensure that the researchers do not know which colour the child received. At a second appointment after 3 months, the filters will be swapped to another colour. The

researchers will be blind to the colour the child receives at any of the follow ups. To assess the effects of the yellow, grey and blue lenses the children are further assessed at 3, 6 and 9 months when all the psychometric and visual assessments are retested. We ask the participants not to disclose the colour of the filter they have received to the researchers . Only at the end of the fourth and final assessment are researchers told treatment order, once the participant has finished the study.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

None of the colours are likely to harm the children in any way and the reading of the majority of them is likely to be helped by one or another colour.

Where is the study run from?

The Dyslexia Research Trust clinic (Reading)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

October 2014 to October 2022

Who is funding the study?

Dyslexia Research Trust (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Professor John Stein

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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Dr John Stein

Contact details

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

REWBYP 1.3

Study information

Scientific Title

The effect of wearing yellow or blue filters on reading and spelling ability: a randomised controlled trial

Acronym

REading With Blue or Yellow Filters (REWBYF)

Study objectives

Can wearing yellow or blue filters help some children to learn to read

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

University of Oxford Medical Sciences Inter Divisional Research Ethics Committee, 29/10/2014, ref: MSD-IDREC-C2-2014-024

Study design

Randomised controlled trial of yellow, blue or placebo filters in up to 200 7-11 yr old children to determine whether the coloured filter appropriate for their visual reading symptoms can help them to learn to read.

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Backward reading (dyslexia)

Interventions

Viewing text through yellow, blue or placebo grey filters

Intervention Type

Device

Primary outcome(s)

Reading and spelling changes

To be assessed at 3, 6 and 9 months

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. BAS matrices
2. Recall of digits
3. Similarities changes
4. Visual symptom changes
5. Random dot motion sensitivity changes

To be assessed at 3, 6 and 9 months

Completion date

28/10/2022

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Children experiencing reading difficulties

Participant type(s)

Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

1. Not fluent in English
2. Any diagnosed medical condition

Date of first enrolment

30/10/2014

Date of final enrolment

28/10/2019

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Dyslexia Research Trust clinic

179a Oxford Road

Reading

United Kingdom

RG1 7UZ

Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Oxford

ROR

<https://ror.org/052gg0110>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Not defined

Funder Name

Dyslexia Research Trust (UK)

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request