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Media Availability: NIH releases clinician resource for simplified diagnosis of dry eye disease

WHAT: Janine Austin Clayton, M.D., Director of the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) and a board-certified ophthalmologist, has developed a resource to assist clinicians in diagnosing and treating dry eye disease. An often painful and debilitating condition, dry eye disease affects nearly 5 million Americans, and affects twice as many women as compared to men. Dr. Clayton describes the resource in a recent [review article](#) in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Beyond causing pain, the condition can disrupt vision and decrease quality of life, making it difficult for those affected to read, drive, and enjoy leisure activities. People with dry eye disease can encounter additional challenges since the disease is "invisible"; others may not be aware when someone has the disease and may not understand when that person requires adjustments to his or her environment — for example, to avoid areas of high air flow — or needs to take breaks from computer work.

The term "dry eye disease" describes a series of signs and symptoms associated with inadequate quantity and/or quality of tears to keep the surface of the eye lubricated. The disease is difficult to diagnose due to a wide variety of underlying causes and symptoms. Patient-reported symptoms may not correlate with the clinical examination, further complicating the diagnosis of dry eye disease. For example, a patient may report symptoms but not have any visible damage to the surface of the eye, prompting clinicians to treat the symptoms of the disease, which offers only temporary relief. Dr. Clayton's article provides a clear overview of the subtypes of dry eye disease to better equip clinicians to diagnose and treat cases.

In addition to the public health impact, the prevalence of dry eye disease takes a substantial economic toll, with an estimated \$3.8 billion in U.S. health care costs annually and an estimated \$55 billion in societal costs (i.e., reduced productivity and indirect costs).

WHO: Janine Austin Clayton, M.D., Director, ORWH, is available to discuss her review article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and ongoing research working toward new approaches and new advances in technology. This information can assist clinicians in determining the underlying cause of individual cases of dry eye disease, which can lead to more effective treatment and management.

ARTICLE: J.A. Clayton. [Dry Eye](#). *New England Journal of Medicine* DOI: 10.1056/NEJMra1407936 (2018).

CONTACT: To schedule an interview, please contact Lamont Williams, Communications Director, ORWH, NIH, at 301-402-1770, or orwhinfo@nih.gov.

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About the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH): *ORWH serves as the focal point for women's health research at NIH. It is the first Public Health Service office dedicated specifically to promoting women's health research within, as well as beyond, the NIH scientific community. The Office also fosters the recruitment, retention, reentry, and advancement of women in biomedical careers. For more information about ORWH, visit www.nih.gov/women.*

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): *NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.*

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