

International Comparison of Eligibility Criteria for Corneal Donation by Men who have Sex with Men. JO Wong (MD candidate), J Fang (MD Candidate), AT Rostov, C Infantides, M Puente, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Colorado, Denver Co.

Over 12 million people worldwide need vision-restoring corneal transplants, but supply is limited by a global shortage of donated corneas. Corneal donors undergo screening to maximize safety of corneal transplants, including HIV testing. HIV has never been transmitted through a corneal transplant, but many countries restrict corneal donation from populations with a higher incidence of HIV — including men who have sex with men (MSM). We sought to create a global database of eligibility criteria for MSM cornea donors in countries with active eye banks to explore the global variation in policy. A list of countries with active eye banks was created with resources from the Global Alliance of Eye Bank Associations and the international SightLife network. We emailed a survey to ≥ 1 eye bank in each country, inquiring about restrictions on corneal donation by MSM. In countries where no eye bank responded, a survey was emailed to local cornea surgeons. We received responses from 51 of 82 countries. 26 countries allow MSM corneal donation, 7 countries disqualify corneal donors with any history of MSM behavior, and 17 countries have time-based restrictions on MSM corneal donors (ranging from 3-month deferral in the UK and Australia, to a 5-year deferral in the US, India, and Ethiopia). One country (China) has restrictions that vary between eye banks. The wide policy discrepancy for MSM corneal donors suggests many countries' eligibility criteria may not be based on current scientific evidence. With the reliability of modern HIV testing, countries with deferral periods longer than the window period for HIV donor testing should consider shortening or eliminating their MSM deferral periods to safely increase corneal supply.