



An Analysis of Private Label Contact Lens Solutions

Amy Dinardo, OD, MBA, FAAO; Jordan Pinozek; Morgan Schuiteman;
Craig W. Norman, FCLSA



Michigan College of Optometry
Vision Research Institute

Introduction

Industry experts estimate that patients buy generic solutions as much as 30% of the time¹. This means that almost one third of patients are using private label solutions despite recommendations from their primary eye care practitioner (ECP) to use specific products.

Practitioners often have little information readily available regarding specific private label products, so they may struggle to answer specific solution-related questions.

The Vision Research Institute at the Michigan College of Optometry performed a study to verify the ingredients of various FDA approved solutions sold as private label brands at major retailers. The findings were documented in an easy-to-read grid for ECP in-office use.



Methods

Twenty-two private label contact lens solutions (13 soft contact lens multipurpose, six hydrogen peroxide, and three GP conditioning and cleaning) were purchased from eight national retailers and one regional chain in the Midwestern United States. Labeling and package inserts for each product were analyzed for their listed ingredients, and then compared with FDA approved solutions to note the equivalent brand name. In some cases, the brands were not easily identifiable solely by labeling, so research on the retailer's or FDA websites was necessary to define their ingredients.

Results

Retail chains that sell lens care products do not manufacture private label lens care solutions. Instead, they contract with manufacturers of FDA approved products under a private label to be used as their store brand name. These may be earlier generation products and may not contain the latest patented chemicals available from the solution manufacturer. In other cases, the solution may be off-patent with the ingredients in the public domain.

Soft Lens Multipurpose Solutions

Similar to: Sauflon All-In-One Lite



Similar to: Bausch + Lomb Renu® Sensitive™



Similar to: Ciba Vision AQuify®



Similar to: AMO Complete®



Similar to: Bausch + Lomb Renu® Fresh™



Similar to: Sauflon One-Step Peroxide



Gas Permeable Lens Solutions

Similar to: Optimum by Lobob® Extra Strength Cleaner



Similar to: Bausch + Lomb Boston® Conditioning Solution



Discussion & Conclusion

The analysis of these private label contact lens solutions that patients have numerous choices. With the wide variety of contact lens solutions available in stores, it is easy to see why a patient may be baffled about the products they are buying.

- **Not all private label solutions have the same ingredients.** In fact, some retail stores sell multiple private label solutions with different brand name equivalents. However, as demonstrated in the MCO/VRI private label solutions grid, these solutions can be categorized by brand name equivalents for use by the ECP.
- **VRI researchers noticed that some labels were designed in way that is likely to mislead patients.** Labels designed to look like brand-name products may lead patients to believe the products are essentially the same when the formulations are, in fact, different. Wording such as “similar to” or “compare to” a specific product can also be misleading.
- **With so many patients choosing to use a variety of private label contact lens solutions, the ECP needs to be aware and help educate their patients of these different formulations,** explaining that not all solutions are the same.
- **Knowledge about private label formulations helps ECPs make informed clinical decisions.**

A picture-based grid of these products and their ingredients was compiled and is available for practitioner use. VRI researchers plan to continue this study on a yearly basis.

Reference:

1. Ward M. How Private-Label Solutions Affect Your Practice. *Contact Lens Spectr*, 21(3) p25.