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# FBM INSIGHTS

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA CAWANGAN KEDAH

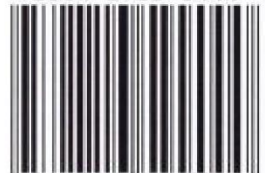
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# UNTOLD HEALTH ISSUE: COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME

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## INTRODUCTION

Many of us have been impacted by the pandemic COVID-19. The pandemic outbreak has inspired many of us to contribute to educators' needs as they move towards online learning (Aguilar, 2020). Consequently, the usage of computers and other electronic devices that can be accessed for online learning and live classes has drastically increased. Due to increased duration of using these gadgets and electronic devices, many have experienced negative impacts to their health, particularly to their eyes. Gowrisankaran and Sheedy (2015) stated that symptoms reported by computer users include eye discomfort, low vision, headache, neck ache, and shoulder pain. Eye discomfort includes eye strain, eye fatigue, burning and irritation of the eyes, tired eyes, dry eyes, and the ache in and around the eyes. Most importantly, low vision comprises blurred vision at near and blurred vision when looking from close to far—all these syndromes known as computer vision syndrome (CVS).

In Malaysia, one study conducted by Reddy et al. (2013) found that the prevalence of CVS among students was 89.9%, including eye strain (asthenopia) at 16.4%. They added that a much higher percentage of asthenopia had been recorded from different countries. Computer users from Italy recorded at 31.9%, 46.3% from India, 68.5% from Spain, and the U.S. reported that 75 percent of computer users who worked long hours on a computer had visual symptoms concerns. Yan et al. (2008) stress out that CVS is "a widely spreading but largely unknown epidemic among computer users." Therefore, this paper would like to discuss this topic more to give a general idea about CVS.

## WHAT IS COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME (CVS)?

According to Loh and Reddy (2008), The American Optometric Association describes CVS as a complex of eye and vision disorders linked to behaviors that stress the near vision and are experienced in or during the use of a computer. Randolph (2017) stated that bad lighting, glare, and reflection on the screen, incorrect viewing distances, bad posture, uncorrected vision problems, or a combination of these factors could cause symptoms.

Symptoms of CVS can be split into three main categories that are (a) eye-related symptoms (dry eyes, watery eyes, irritated eyes, burning eyes), (b) vision-related signs (eyestrain, eye fatigue, headache, blurred vision, double vision), and (c) posture-related symptoms (sore neck, shoulder pain, sore back) (Yan et al., 2008). They added that working near a computer screen and long-hour computer works are two general factors leading to CVS. Randolph (2017) suggests a comprehensive eye examination to determine CVS, which should include the worker's history of CVS symptoms, general health conditions, medication use, or other environmental factors that can lead to eye strain. Also, visual acuity, refractive checking, and how

well the eyes focus, move, work together should be addressed. She added that occupational and environmental health professionals should educate computer users to prevent eye strain.

One technique to prevent eye strain is the 20-20-20 rule: take a 20-second break to see something 20 feet away every 20 minutes. Computer users should be encouraged to blink regularly to keep their eyes moist. The computer monitor should be 15 to 20 degrees below the eye level (about 10-13 cm) measured from the monitor's center and 50 to 70 cm from the eye. Users should place the document above the keyboard and below the display and use the paper holder alongside the monitor.

Proper lighting at the workstation would enhance visual relief and comfort. Users should control lighting to reduce the glare on display. If necessary, the window light should be on the side. The use of filters can minimize glare when the surrounding light sources are fixed. Additionally, users may adjust the brightness, contrast, and font size of the device.

## CONCLUSION

Taking breaks in between computer usage is the most common preventive measure to relieve the symptoms of CVS. Users can apply the 20-20-20 rule to prevent eye strain. Furthermore, educators should inform the dangers of CVS to the younger computer users at an early age. Thus, preventing CVS symptoms will increase productivity at work and enhance visual comfort towards computer users.

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