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Sir, Preventable eye injuries while fly fishing

The article by Morris *et al*¹ prompts me to bring to readers' attention the risks inherent in the fly-fishing technique known as Spey casting, when the fly line with attached 'fly', tied on a single, double, or treble hook, is cast first to the left, then the right, and then forwards, the line being all the time in front of the angler so that obstructions behind—such as trees—are not inadvertently hooked.

In June 2013, I was Spey casting on the Lower Oykel river, Highland, with a variable wind blowing sometimes up- and sometimes downstream. A sharp 'crack' caused the ghillie, sitting some 50 m away on the bank, to ask 'What was that?' It was the fly shattering my right spectacle lens, which fell into several pieces when removed from the frame. Had I not been wearing glasses, my eye would have been destroyed.

Some weeks later, two unsolicited catalogues advertising angling products arrived; both had in their fishing lines section photographs of men Spey casting without eye protection. I wrote to both angling companies enclosing the attached photo (Figure 1). One

Figure 1 Glasses damaged while Spey casting in a strong wind.

responded, indicating that they would bring the matter to the (subcontracted) advertiser's attention—the other did not reply.

Could our College have a role in promoting the use of safety glasses in this situation? For an example see: www.oveRxcast.com.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Reference

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Sir, Response to 'Preventable eye injuries while fly fishing'

We thank Mr Finlay¹ for drawing your readers attention to the inherent dangers of Spey casting while fly fishing, and indeed the general danger to the eye from any form of fishing, from his own personal experience. It is interesting to note that injuries from fishing accounted for 1% of all those reported injuries in the 2009 Scottish Ocular Trauma Study (unpublished data) and 1.7% in the 1992 Scottish Ocular Trauma Study.²

We are aware that the American Academy of Ophthalmology is involved in eye injury prevention with their 'EyeSmart' program (<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/>), and acknowledge that similar campaigns in the UK (http://www.nib.org.uk/eyehealth/lookingafteryoureyes/Pages/safe_eyes.aspx) have had a prominent role in eye injury prevention, but we would urge caution on focusing on a specific area like fishing without gathering more evidence of the incidence of injury and risk involved.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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