

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Coloured pots

Name Ian Hamilton.

Job Optometrist.

Where Specsavers, Hunter Street, Sydney.

Why are they important?

As an optometrist, most of my day is spent examining people's eyes for spectacles, screening eyes for defects, or dispensing and adjusting glasses. But sometimes, when I'm testing for colour-blindness, I use these coloured pots. They are really 15 different-coloured pieces that are used for the Farnsworth D15 colour-vision test. The pots help distinguish people who have colour deficiencies, as well as their severity. The person being tested lines up the pots to the colour they think matches. People with normal colour vision line them up in order of one to 15 [the numbers are on the back]. Most tests only differentiate between the two main types of colour-blindness, but if people have a blue/yellow problem, this test also helps identify that.

What do your clients think of it?

Most colour-vision defects are linked to gender – it's to do with an X chromosome defect. Men usually exhibit it; women tend not to. The test is an easy thing to do, and the colours themselves are quite pretty pastels, so people get engaged.

Unusual moment?

When someone with a green or red defect does the test and I turn the pots over, they see that the numbers are all out of order. It's a bit funny seeing the look on people's faces.

SUE WHITE



Photo: Simon Alekna