

Additional file 1: Table S1. Patient identification and selection.

Stage	AS	COE	Total
Severe DED patients meeting clinical eligibility criteria	28	24	52
Excluded — missing ≥ 1 outcome at ≥ 1 time point	5	3	8
Complete-case eligible patients	23	21	44
Excluded — not selected after sex/5-year-age-band matching	3	1	4
Final analytic cohort	20	20	40

Stage-by-stage patient numbers, by treatment group, from initial identification to the final analytic cohort. All patients met the clinical eligibility criteria; patients were then restricted to complete cases (full OSDI, Schirmer I, and TBUT data at baseline and within each of the three prespecified follow-up windows) and subsequently matched on sex and 5-year age bands to yield two groups of equal size. The equal final group sizes result from this selection and matching process, not from prospective enrollment or randomization. Within sex- and 5-year age-band strata containing more eligible patients than required, final inclusion followed the ascending order of the anonymized screening serial number assigned during the initial record extraction, an ordering fixed before any post-treatment outcome value was reviewed.

AS, 25% autologous serum; COE, 0.05% cyclosporine A ophthalmic emulsion; DED, dry eye disease; OSDI, Ocular Surface Disease Index; TBUT, tear break-up time.