

Editorial

Optometry: A Primary Eye AND Vision Care Profession for All Ages

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Editor

Thanks to the Interstate Highway System, it is now possible to travel from coast to coast without seeing anything.

Charles Kuralt

We usually travel along our various life-paths to achieve an objective or specific destination while frequently ignoring what's along the way. We may gain time, but lose insight. We may add to our baggage many wonderful things collected while traveling, but lose other equally as valuable items along the way. We "get there" but at what cost? Upon our arrival we only seldom ask, "Is this where we really wanted to be?" Over the last several decades optometry as a whole has shifted its emphasis from a "vision profession" that was "drugless" to an "eye care profession" that uses

the latest tools available including various pharmaceuticals.

Would I want to return to the "good ol' days" when functional vision was king? Of course not! Our ability to currently diagnose and treat all of the primary eye and vision care needs of our patients, far outweighs any desire to turn back the scope of practice clock. And, if you clear the fog of nostalgia from your view, you will realize that functional/behavioral optometry, has always had to "do it all" for our patients.

Prevention, Remediation, Enhancement

Optometry has been described as the "cradle to grave" eye care profession.¹ As an active member of the AOA's InfantSee program, a Professor of Pediatric Optometry at the Illinois College of Optometry, and a one day a week in the trenches, private practice doctor who sees a wide variety of patients; I can certainly agree with that statement. If you take a close look at the picture on the cover of this journal, you will see the wide range of our constituency and the breadth of stakeholders that functional/behavioral optometry must serve. Are you a member of the InfantSee program examining the very young? Do you provide functional vision care for those 30 year old adults who work hard raising and supporting their families?

Do you examine and treat those who are more chronologically enhanced? Do you use the tenants of functional vision care for those who are retired from the "work-a-day" life, but active in "life"? If not, you should. If not you, who?

Where Will We Be When We Get Where We Are Going?

We would prefer that all of our optometric colleagues pay a bit more attention to the functional aspect of eye care. One way for us to have them start doing just that, is to introduce functional optometric eye and vision care as appropriate for all ages. We must be prepared to diagnose and treat any pathology present while also recognizing that there is often a functional component to any organic vision loss and that we can treat this vision loss.

During our fall meeting, Dr. Paul Freeman, the editor of *Optometry* (AOA's official journal), internationally recognized low vision practitioner, and a Fellow of COVD; will tell us how to do exactly just that. What's more functionally oriented than vision rehabilitation? What's more primary care than preventing vision loss due to organic/functional anomalies, enhancing existing or remaining vision, and/or remediating any oculo-visual-developmental abnormalities that are present no matter the age of the patient.

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Where will we be when we get to where we are going? I can't answer that for the rest of the profession, but I will do my very best to be the kind of primary eye and vision care professional that will be able to diagnose and treat most of my patient's problems most of the time. Isn't that the true definition of primary care?

Reference

1. US News and World Report <http://www.usnews.com/careers>. Accessed August 7, 2007.



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Welcome Pediatric/Binocular Vision Residents for 2007-08

Let's please welcome the following residents when you see them at the COVD meeting this fall.

Ohio State

Dr. Michelle Buckland OSU 06
Dr. Aaron Zimmerman OSU 06

Indiana University

Dr. Michelle Frye IU 07

Pacific University

Dr. Yokoi Garnet NECO 07

Illinois Collage of Optometry

Dr. Megan Allen ICO 07
Dr. Jeffrey Oakland ICO 06

University of Houston

Dr. Emma Vicuna SCCO 07

State University of New York, State College of Optometry

Dr. Jonathan Cho SUNY 07
Dr. Briana M. Larson SCCO 07
Dr. Marcus L. Myers PCO 07
Dr. Hadassa L. Rutman SUNY 07

University of Alabama Birmingham

Dr. Holly C. Gutierrez ABSO 07

Pennsylvania College of Optometry

Dr. Erica L. Feigenbutz PCO 07
Dr. Katerin A. Ortiz ICO 07

Southern California College of Optometry

Dr. Erica Johnson OSU 07
Dr. Donna Simonian UCB 07