

BE INSPIRED TO EVOLVE AND ADAPT



With spring and summer upon us, optometrists from coast to coast are seeing patients eager to embrace the warmer weather (in some parts of the country), longer days, and outdoor activities these

months bring. However, along with the longer days of sunlight, this time of year also brings with it increased exposure to allergens and UV light. On a positive note, this seasonal transition presents a timely opportunity to learn about a growing and vital area of our profession: oculoplastics and ocular aesthetics.

In recent years, oculoplastic care, a field traditionally dominated by surgical correction of the eyelids and orbital abnormalities, has expanded to intersect with optometry in increasingly meaningful ways. Now a specialty, aesthetic eye care offers patients both functional and cosmetic solutions that directly affect the ocular health and quality of life of patients. And with so many patients already turning to optometry for many of their eye care needs—specifically ocular surface disease (OSD) management—it's only natural that optometrists also become the recognized experts in guiding them through aesthetic therapies that support ocular wellness and visual comfort.

One of the most compelling examples of how eye care and ocular wellness naturally overlap is the aesthetic effects of OSD, which can result not only in discomfort and visual fluctuations, but also in hyperemia, erythema, and changes in the appearance of the eyelid. Consequently, patients are increasingly aware of how chronic ocular issues affect the way they look and feel. The role of the

optometrist is not only to treat OSD, but also to educate patients that treatment can offer both relief and visible improvement.

Fortunately, the toolbox of aesthetic ocular technologies continues to grow. In-office devices such as intense pulsed light, radiofrequency, gland heating and clearing systems, and low-level light therapy are transforming the way we approach both OSD and ocular aesthetics. These technologies treat the root causes of disease while improving periocular appearance. They reduce inflammation, restore lid function, and minimize signs of fatigue and aging. Moreover, they offer optometrists a unique opportunity to diversify their practice offerings while delivering outcomes that resonate with their patients' desires.

As primary eye care providers, optometrists are well-positioned to identify candidates for procedures such as blepharoplasty, ptosis repair, and many other ocular aesthetic procedures. The growing demand for noninvasive aesthetic services opens the door for collaborative care with oculoplastic surgeons. Comanagement not only improves patient outcomes but also strengthens relationships between optometrists and ophthalmologists.

As spring and summer often inspire renewal, let the emerging seasons inspire us to renew our commitment to evolving with the needs and expectations of our patients. Oculoplastics and ocular aesthetics are no longer niche—they are essential aspects of eye care. By embracing these services, we reinforce the value of optometry in both the medical and lifestyle domains of our patients' lives. ■

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