

WHY OPTOMETRY THRIVES AT THE INTERSECTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND CRITICAL THINKING



Have you ever had a patient walk into your exam room quoting Google or ChatGPT and challenging your clinical expertise? Or, maybe they ask questions about something you haven't even

researched yet? One favorite recent story involves a patient, armed with nothing more than a Facebook Messenger thread, who insisted her neighbor knew more about her posterior capsule formation and the need for an Nd:YAG capsulotomy than her surgeon. She was convinced it was a complication that never should have happened and hadn't happened to anyone else and, therefore, something had gone horribly awry with her cataract surgery. (Spoiler: the neighbor was neither an optometrist nor an ophthalmologist.)

If it hasn't happened to you yet, just wait. It will.

In today's world of instant information, patients arrive at cataract and refractive consultations with either too much information, not enough information, or completely unrealistic expectations. They want perfection. They want personalization. And they want it yesterday.

That's why being an optometrist in 2025 is not just exhilarating, it's empowering.

We stand at a rare and powerful intersection in health care, where cutting-edge technology meets deeply personal decision-making. Every time we talk to a patient about cataract surgery, refractive options, or IOL selection, we're not simply discussing a procedure, we're helping them make one of the most significant decisions of their lives. One they'll live with daily. And one we, as their doctor, will be responsible for supporting.

It's not just about choosing between a monofocal, light adjustable lens, toric, multifocal, or extended

depth of focus design. It's about helping someone see their future. It's about bridging the art of delivering a diagnosis with the science of selecting the right technology for the right patient at the right time.

It's also about communication. Our role isn't simply to educate patients—it's also to translate. To guide patients through complexity with empathy, clarity, and confidence. To present options in a way that resonates with how they process information so they can make informed decisions and walk away feeling empowered, not overwhelmed. The reason behind all this is technology doesn't replace critical thinking—it demands it. And that's what makes our role so powerful. We are the interpreters, the advocates, the collaborators. We bring order to the chaos of acronyms, algorithms, and options. We don't just understand ocular anatomy, but also the human behind the eye.

Collaborative care is more than comanagement, it's about co-leadership. Whether we're running preoperative calculations, managing higher-order aberrations, or restoring a neglected ocular surface postoperatively, we're solving puzzles that require wisdom and curiosity, in addition to optometric knowledge. This requires us to show up proactively, confidently, and intentionally.

These qualities are what make being an optometrist today not just meaningful, but masterful. Because we don't just talk about vision, we expand it. We don't just follow protocols, we elevate them. We don't just embrace technology, we lead it forward with purpose. So, here's to all of you: the critical thinkers, the collaborators, the clinicians brave enough to look through every lens with curiosity and courage. This issue is for you.

The future of vision is bright and ours to shape.

Happy reading! ■

xoxo,

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