Learn more about myopia at the keynote lecture

The College is delighted that international eye health expert Professor Mark Bullimore has agreed to give the keynote lecture at this year’s conference. Professor Bullimore will examine the findings from some of the most interesting worldwide studies, such as recent research that suggested playing outdoors could help protect children from developing myopia.

In the UK approximately 46 per cent of the population suffers from myopia and recent data has suggested that its prevalence is increasing in many countries. Professor Bullimore’s George Miles Memorial Lecture ‘Myopia: changing our role from correction to control’ will cover the risk factors for developing myopia, examine the findings of clinical trials that have looked at ways of controlling the condition, and discuss future therapies. Professor Bullimore is an independent regulatory consultant, development professional and adjunct professor at the University of Houston College of Optometry, USA. He is also the College’s president of the American Optometric Foundation.

‘I’m delighted to be asked by the College of Optometrists to take part in Optometry Tomorrow,’ comments Professor Bullimore. ‘It’s a real honour to give the keynote speech, and on a subject which affects nearly half the UK population. All optometrists see patients with myopia so it’s important that practitioners equip themselves with the latest knowledge about the causes of the condition, as well as emerging prevention and control methods.’

Monday 18 March, 1.30-2.30pm

KEY LECTURES AND SEMINARS

Here some of this year’s presenters tell us a bit more about what they’ll be presenting and how optometrists can benefit from attending their sessions:

Paediatric optometry: tears, tantrums and toddlers

What’s it all about?
Testing young children in practice is an important aspect of the service optometrists provide in their communities, particularly in the many areas of the UK where school vision programmes are not in place. Optometrists have a big responsibility to make sure they are carrying out the most appropriate and effective vision tests on children and recognising at the earliest possible opportunity the symptoms of any conditions which could impair a child's sight if they are left undetected. This session uses the research evidence base and case studies to explore which tests give optometrists the best basis on which to provide a gold-standard service for their young patients.

Why should I attend?
Optometrists attending this lecture will leave with an:
● Understanding of the importance of their role in managing young children’s visual needs
● Understanding of the strengths and limitations of commercially available acuity tests for young children
● Appreciation of the importance of an evidence-based approach to children’s eye care
● Appropriate knowledge of alternative methods for assessing visual function.

Who is speaking?
Dr Kathryn J Saunders, reader in Optometry and Vision Science, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland.

Saunders’ main research interests relate to development of refractive error, the impact of neurological impairment on vision in childhood and optimising visual potential of children with special needs.

Saunders says: ‘Much research has been conducted over the past few decades which is now available to help optometrists use the best tests, confidently understand what the results of those tests mean and act appropriately on them. My lecture will use the current evidence base to explore strengths and weaknesses in commonly used paediatric visual acuity tests. I will recommend gold-standard tests and protocols for managing inter-ocular acuity differences and sub-optimal vision.’

Sunday 17 March, 12 noon-1pm

Grease and economic stability - lids and blepharitis in practice

What’s it all about?
Understanding eyelids is extremely important for optometrists. Eyelids are known to be linked to dry eye, a host of inflammatory conditions and many other factors affecting comfort and vision. In this session participants will be able to learn about best practice for treating eyelid diseases and learn about new treatment options and their benefits to patients.

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Sunday 17 March, 12 noon-1pm

Tour of the conference centre

What’s it all about?
A tour of the conference centre will take place to give attendees a brief overview of the facilities before the start of the conference.

Why should I attend?
Optometrists attending this tour will leave with an:
● Understanding of the layout of the conference centre
● Appreciation of the facilities available to attendees
● Knowledge of how to get the most out of the conference.

Who is speaking?
No one.

No one.

Sunday 17 March, 12 noon-1pm
Why should I attend?
Optometrists attending this session will leave with:
● A familiarity of the signs and symptoms of eyelid disease
● An ability to diagnose and manage different types of eyelid diseases
● An ability to apply new treatment options for eyelid disease
● An understanding of the benefits of new products related to eyelid disease.

Who is speaking?
Ian Cameron, IP optometrist and managing director of Cameron Optometry. With diplomas in contact lens practice and independent therapeutic prescribing, Cameron lectures widely on a range of aspects of optometry and continues to be active in research.

Cameron says: ‘At this straight talking seminar you’ll be given lots of useful tips on managing eyelids that will save you time, delight your patients and benefit your business. Perhaps you’ve never thought of lids as quite such an important part of your practice? Well they are and you should – come and find out why’

Monday 17 March, 9.30-10.30am

1 in 10: eye care and dementia
What’s it all about?
This session explores the relationship between dementia, a condition which is affecting more people in the UK than ever before, and eye sight. The condition can cause a vast array of visual symptoms which all optometrists need to make sure they are familiar with. Furthermore, some dementia types can present with prominent visual symptoms right from the outset and early recognition of these symptoms can lead to swifter diagnoses for patients.

● Optometrist competencies:
  Ocular vision, communication

Why should I attend?
Optometrists attending this session will leave with:
● An understanding of the role of current OCT instruments in examining the anterior eye
● An ability to make accurate measurements of corneal thickness and relate them to IOP readings
● An ability to make accurate assessments of the angle of the anterior chamber and relate them to the risk of acute glaucoma.

Who is speaking?
Richard Petrie, independent optometrist. Petrie’s practice was one of the first to install and use OCT technology in the UK.

Petrie says: ‘This workshop is designed to give an understanding of the uses of OCT in examining the anterior eye in everyday practice. Delegates will be able to take measurements of corneal thickness and of the angle of the anterior chamber for themselves before a discussion of how these relate to current techniques of pachymetry and gonioscopy and their relevance in studying open and closed angle glaucomas.’

Monday 18 March 4-5pm

Dr Jo Jefferis, doctoral research fellow, Clinical Ageing Research Unit, Newcastle University. Jefferis is a specialty trainee in ophthalmology and hopes to pioneer a new speciality in ‘old age ophthalmology’.

Jefferis says: ‘With an estimated 24.4 million sufferers worldwide and affecting 10 per cent of over 65-year-olds, dementia is a problem we will all encounter in our everyday work. The condition can cause a vast array of visual symptoms which we need to be familiar with.’

Monday 18 March, 9-10am

Eyes front! OCT of the anterior eye
What’s it all about?
The OCT instrument has enormous potential in studying the anterior eye as well as the posterior eye, and is now becoming an accepted part of everyday optometric practice. This workshop will explore the measurements that can be made using currently available OCT instruments which have the potential to replace and improve upon other currently used techniques. It will also give insight into the economic realities of using OCT in general optometric practice.

● Optometrist competencies:
  Ocular examination, ocular disease

Why should I attend?
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Monday 18 March, 9-10am

Support for Independent Prescribers
This year’s conference offers significant support for independent prescribers (IPs), including those who are already qualified and those who simply wish to learn more about prescribing. Independent prescribing offers optometrists the opportunity to both enhance their role and to provide a better service for their patients. Qualified independent prescribers take responsibility for the clinical assessment of a patient, establishing a diagnosis and determining the clinical management required, including prescribing where necessary.

IP qualified optometrists are given a licence to prescribe ophthalmic drugs that would otherwise have to be prescribed by a doctor. This will help optometrists to diagnose and treat more eye conditions in high street practice, which in turn will benefit patients, ease the pressure on busy hospital eye clinics and at the same time provide a more rewarding career path for the optometrist involved.

For the first time optometrists can benefit from a dedicated IP stream. Independent Prescribing CET points are available from a number of seminars and workshops during the two days. Those who aren’t already independent prescribers can still benefit from the sessions and will receive general CET points. Sessions cover topics including:
● Contact lens wear and allergies
● How to set up a dry eye clinic
● Lids and blepharitis in practice
● Anterior uveitis – a review for optometrists.

GLAMOROUS GALA DINNER
As well as training and learning opportunities the conference offers a fantastic opportunity for optometrists to network and enjoy themselves at the gala dinner on the evening of the Sunday 17 March.

This year’s gala dinner is James Bond-themed, with a drinks reception, three-course dinner, themed entertainment and a live band. Guests are asked to dress in black tie for what is sure to be one of the most glamorous events in the optical sector’s calendar.

The dinner will take place at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel. Tickets cost £50 per person.

To find out more and to book your tickets please visit the website www.optometrytomorrow.org.