

...from Wal-Mart
Professional Relations
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Director of
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Optical Division



In many locations, your patients' seasonal activities have a significant impact on their vision care needs. I think you will find this edition especially timely and relevant. My personal favorite is the cover story, "What Active Patients Want." Also in this issue, true to the high caliber of educational information you've come to expect, you'll find a clinical article on UV exposure. Enjoy!

...from VISTAKON[®]
Sheila B. Hickson-Curran,
BSc(Hons),
MCOptom, FAAO

Director,
Medical Affairs



As Contributing Editor for *OD News*, I'm eager to offer my experience in contact lens technology to assist in developing content for this important newsletter. I gained my optometric qualifications in the United Kingdom and have experience in clinical, educational, and research work there and in Australia. Before becoming Director of Medical Affairs, I spent twelve years in Research and Development at VISTAKON[®], sharing in the development of a number of contact lens products, including the development of UV-blocking contact lenses and the invention of Accelerated Stabilization Design (ASD) used in ACUVUE[®] ADVANCE[®] Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM and our new product, ACUVUE[®] OASYS[™] Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM (see later articles).

I see working on *OD News* as an opportunity to share some of the accumulated knowledge that comes from my years in product development, and I look forward to hearing from you about your needs and those of your patients. Your input is critical to the development of quality products and effective communications. Please feel free to contact me at pa@visus.jnj.com.

What Active Patients Want

Comfort. Convenience. Trouble-free, clear vision. These attributes make contact lens wear appealing to active patients.

"Meeting the vision needs of active patients includes determining what they do regularly, plus the special things they do," says Graham B. Erickson, OD, FAAO, FCOVD, diplomate in the Binocular Vision and Perception Section of the American Academy of Optometry, professor at Pacific University College of Optometry and author of *Sports Vision: Vision Care for the Enhancement of Sports Performance*. "For example, a patient might be a computer programmer who wears glasses all day, but also plays league soccer, when contact lenses are a better option."

Dr. Erickson offers a broad definition of "active." "Almost every patient does something for recreation, sport, or physical conditioning," he says. "Even those who don't, usually drive vehicles, and driving has visual demands similar to athletics."

Best modalities

The contact lens that fits a patient best and provides the best vision is the best lens—that's always the bottom line," says Dr. Erickson. "The daily disposable option offers a great solution for many athletes—especially athletes who wear glasses most of the time, but need contact lenses when competing. They get clean, fresh lenses every time." 1•DAY ACUVUE[®] and 1•DAY ACUVUE[®] MOIST[®] Brand Contact Lenses are examples of daily disposable contact lenses.

Daily wear contact lenses also may work well for some active patients, says Dr. Erickson. "ACUVUE[®] OASYS[™] Brand Contact Lenses, for example, stay very comfortable even in dry conditions. Issues of dry and low humidity conditions are common challenges faced by many patients."

UV protection important

"We know there is a cumulative effect of ultraviolet light on the tissues of the eye," says Dr. Erickson. "UV-blocking contact lenses cover a portion of those tissues. So, though they cannot reduce long-term exposure 100 percent, they offer a significant amount of coverage to the eye's internal structures."

Dr. Erickson adds that offering patients the contact lens choice that complements their active lifestyle with the best vision correction that supports eye health will keep them returning to you. "Meeting a patient's special needs will distinguish your service beyond the patient's expectations."



PACs provide peer-to-peer discussions with eye care providers all across the country

OD Practices: Dr. Frank LaRussa and Dr. Alicia Lombardo

**PAC doctors educate,
introduce practice
management concepts**

Several years ago, after observing the disconnect between its Professional Affairs group and the eye care providers they serve, VISTAKON® initiated an advisory panel of Professional Affairs Consultants (PACs). These PACs are a team of eight practicing optometrists who provide peer-to-peer discussions with eye care providers all across the country. The primary responsibilities of the PACs are to educate eye care professionals and their staff on how to implement new products into their practices, along with the introduction of practice management concepts. Presently, VISTAKON® has two PACs employed to represent the Wal-Mart and Sam's Club market and its associated eye care providers. The dynamic duo is Dr. Frank LaRussa and Dr. Alicia Lombardo.

Dr. LaRussa, based in Birmingham, Alabama, has been a PAC for three years. In addition to mentoring his fellow doctors, Dr. LaRussa continues to see patients in his Wal-Mart location, Store 1481, in Homewood, Alabama, where he's been for the past ten years. As a PAC, Dr. LaRussa has written several articles for VISTAKON®, one of which was printed in the American Optometric Association journal discussing corporate-affiliated optometry as a mode of practice. He has been instrumental in initiating numerous Wal-Mart and Sam's Club doctor groups across the country. He also held a position on the Wal-Mart Professional Affairs Advisory Panel from 2005-2006. For his professional dedication and commitment to his patients, Dr. LaRussa was named Wal-Mart Doctor of the Year for 2007.

Dr. Lombardo, from Altoona, Pennsylvania, is new to the role of a PAC for 2008. Dr. Lombardo has been a corporate-affiliated optometrist with the Wal-Mart Corporation for more than ten years. Her practice is located within Sam's Club Optical 6460, in her hometown, where she has been for the past six years. Prior to her appointment as a PAC, Dr. Lombardo was a two-year member of the Optometric Business Academy advisory panel. She currently serves on the Wal-Mart Professional Affairs Advisory Panel. For her community service efforts and commitment to her patients, Dr. Lombardo was named Sam's Club Optical Doctor of the Year for her region in 2004.

Throughout the next year, Dr. LaRussa and Dr. Lombardo will be visiting Wal-Mart and Sam's Club locations nationwide. Their mission is to engage doctors in peer-to-peer discussions regarding practice management techniques, introducing new contact lens technology, and encouraging doctors to take ownership of their practices. Dr. LaRussa and Dr. Lombardo look forward

to meeting with you and assisting VISTAKON® with servicing its customers, the dedicated eye care providers of Wal-Mart and Sam's Club.

**If you have questions or concerns
to share with Dr. LaRussa or
Dr. Lombardo, they are eager to
hear from you:**

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Help Patients Protect Eyes From UV Exposure

By Sheila B. Hickson-Curran, BSc(Hons), MCOptom, FAAO
Director, Medical Affairs

Most of your patients are aware that diligent use of sunscreen can help protect against skin cancer. But they may not be so careful about shielding their eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Depletion of the ozone layer, longer life expectancies, traveling to new locales, and more time spent outdoors all may contribute to UV overexposure.^{1,2}

Sunglasses alone are not enough

While sunglasses with UV-blocking lenses can help shield eyes from UV rays in sunlight, they only block about 50 percent of UV radiation, since sunlight can enter the eye from above, below, and around the lenses of the sunglasses.

UV-blocking contact lenses help protect against the transmission of harmful UV radiation to the cornea and into the eye. But only some contact lenses offer truly effective UV protection. Among contact lens brands, only ACUVUE® ADVANCE® Brand Contact Lenses, ACUVUE® ADVANCE® Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM, and ACUVUE® OASYS™ Brand Contact Lenses carry the Seal of Acceptance for Ultraviolet Absorbing Contact Lenses from the American Optometric Association Commission on Ophthalmic Standards. These lenses offer the highest level of UV blocking* available, blocking more than 90 percent of UVA rays and 99 percent of UVB rays that reach the lens. All ACUVUE® Brand contact lenses contain a UV blocker.

Advise your patients about UV

The general lack of understanding about the need for ocular UV protection gives you

an opportunity to fill this knowledge gap for your patients.

Many patients don't realize their sunglasses and/or contact lenses alone do not adequately protect their eyes from UV radiation:

- 66 percent believe sunglasses alone are enough to protect against UV exposure³
- 57 percent don't know if their contact lenses provide UV blocking³
- 39 percent believe all contact lenses provide UV protection³

It's never too early to begin protecting eyes:

- UV damage is cumulative and can lead to eye diseases such as pterygia and cortical cataract
- UV protection for eyes is as important as sunscreen is for skin
- Children may be more vulnerable to UV exposure because:
 - they have larger pupils and clearer lenses^{4,5}
 - they spend more time outdoors, and
 - may not regularly wear sunglasses⁶

Inform your patients that to adequately protect their eyes from UV exposure, the combination of the following will provide the best protection:

- quality sunglasses (wraparound or goggle-style)
- a broad-brimmed hat
- UV-blocking contact lenses (for patients requiring refractive correction)

Introducing ACUVUE® OASYS™ Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM



You asked for it: ACUVUE® OASYS™ Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM

provide all the material benefits of ACUVUE® OASYS™ Brand Contact Lenses with the lens stability of Accelerated Stabilization Design. Your patients with astigmatism won't have to compromise on vision or comfort any longer.

Features and benefits

- Senofilcon A combined with HYDRACLEAR® Plus for a more wetttable, ultrasmooth lens
- Accelerated Stabilization Design for crisp, clear vision in everyday and active situations
- Four zones of positive lid interaction
- Class 1 UV protection**
- High oxygen transmissibility

Patients who can benefit from this new product include astigmatic patients who:

- want crisp, clear vision all day
- spend extended periods of time in front of a computer
- are active, and
- like to wear their lenses comfortably

Make it easy to talk with patients about UV:

- Enlist your staff's help, including starting the patient education process with the appointment reminder call
- Use posters and brochures in exam rooms and waiting areas to spread the UV message
- Ask UV-related questions on patient history forms

Helping each patient avoid ocular damage from UV exposure will deliver a lifetime of healthier eyes and a healthier practice for you.

¹McKenzie RL, Aucamp PJ, Bals AF, Bjorn LO, Ilyas M. Changes in biologically active ultraviolet radiation reaching the Earth's surface. *Photochem Photobiol Sci* 2007;6(3):218-31.

²Minino AM, Heron MP, Murphy SL, Kochanek KD; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics national Vital Statistics System. Deaths: final data for 2004. *Natl Vital Stat Rep* 2007;55(19):1-119.

³Brand Health Monitor Report, November 2005.

⁴Winn B, Whitaker D, Elliott DB, Phillips NJ. Factors affecting light-adapted pupil size in normal human subjects. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci* 1994;35(3):1132-6.

⁵Gaillard ER, Zheng L, Merriam JC, Dillon J. Age-related changes in the absorption characteristics of the primate lens. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci* 2000;41(6):1454-9.

⁶Godar DE, Urbach F, Gasparro FP, van der Leun JC. UV doses of young adults. *Photochem Photobiol* 2003;77(4):453-7

*Helps protect against transmission of harmful UV radiation to the cornea and into the eye.

**WARNING: UV-absorbing contact lenses are NOT substitutes for protective UV-absorbing eyewear such as UV-absorbing goggles or sunglasses because they do not completely cover the eye and surrounding area. You should continue to use UV-absorbing eyewear as directed. NOTE: Long-term exposure to UV radiation is one of the risk factors associated with cataracts. Exposure is based on a number of factors such as environmental conditions (altitude, geography, cloud cover) and personal factors (extent and nature of outdoor activities). UV-blocking contact lenses help provide protection against harmful UV radiation. However, clinical studies have not been done to demonstrate that wearing UV-blocking contact lenses reduces the risk of developing cataracts or other eye disorders. Consult your eye care practitioner for more information.

Taking Ownership of Your Practice

A four-step program involving change in attitude, not location

By Alicia Lombardo, OD and Frank LaRussa, OD

Today, nearly 50 percent of all optometrists hold a corporate-affiliated position. Among many in those ranks, there is a common and unfortunate misconception: We often feel that we don't have the same ownership in our practices as other health care providers. As real as that perception may feel to many corporate-affiliated doctors, we believe there's little evidence to support it.

If you compare us with other health care practices, such as dentists, family practitioners, and even specialists, our positioning as corporate-affiliated optometrists is very similar. Those health care providers find a practice location (most lease the space), set up their offices as they deem appropriate, purchase the

necessary equipment, train their staff, market their practices, and then, most important, see patients. In addition, these health care providers set their own hours, establish their own fees, and practice their specialties to the extent they feel comfortable. These doctors treat their patients appropriately and recommend the best course of action to meet their patients' needs, whether it is therapeutics, surgery, or medical devices, without the complications or personal conflicts of becoming profitable from these recommendations. Sound familiar? It should. It's the way most corporate-affiliated optometrists run their practices!

Still, many corporate-affiliated optometrists have nearsighted views of the

situation because they insist on comparing themselves to optometric private practitioners. In doing so, they fail to see their role in the larger picture as a health care provider in the medical model. You're unlikely to hear an internal medicine doctor say he owns less of his practice because he rents space in a mini-mall, or something similar from a dentist whose practice is located in a converted house. Yet, as corporate-affiliated optometrists, the tendency is to feel less empowered because our practices are located in retail environments. The mindset of owning your practice within a corporate environment could be more successful with a change in attitude, rather than a change in office location.

So how do you take ownership of your practice within a retail setting? Here are four basic concepts we've seen used successfully by prosperous corporate-affiliated optometrists across the country.

1 Personalize your office

Create a warm, friendly environment for your patients. Start by decorating your office to reflect your style, display a few family photos, and add plants or an aquarium. This will convey to patients that this is a place where you enjoy working.

2 Promote the practice as your own

Print posters to hang in the store or hand out flyers advertising your practice and office hours. Other promotional suggestions include getting involved in the community by participating in local vision screenings or civic groups to acquaint people with you and your practice.

3 Incorporate new technology into your office

Consider purchasing a retinal camera, go paperless, lease an optomap®, or install Eyemaginations software in your office. These measures will enhance your practice efficiency and diagnostic capabilities. They also are effective marketing tools, since many patients are eager to tell their friends about the new equipment their doctor has.

4 Provide thorough staff training

Consider your staff as an extension of you. This will only be true, however, if you take an active part in their training. Your patients should receive consistent care and attention from the optical staff, just as they do inside your office.

Incorporating all these practice management tools can be time-consuming and costly, so you may not choose to implement them all at once. However, setting goals and establishing a plan of action to introduce these new concepts will strengthen your sense of ownership. As corporate-affiliated optometrists, it's our responsibility to take our rightful place in the health care industry, provide excellent care to our patients, and, just as important, take ownership of our practices.

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ACUVUE® Brand Contact Lenses are indicated for vision correction. As with any contact lens, eye problems, including corneal ulcers, can develop. Some wearers may experience mild irritation, itching, or discomfort. Lenses should not be prescribed if patients have any eye infection, or experience eye discomfort, excessive tearing, vision changes, redness, or other eye problems. Consult the package insert for complete information. Complete information is also available from VISTAKON®, Division of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc., by calling 1-800-843-2020 or by visiting ecp.acuvue.com.

Contact VISTAKON® Professional Affairs—We welcome your comments, questions, suggestions, tips, or even complaints.

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