

Comments on proposed therapeutic qualification as part of general registration

I do not believe that all optometrists should be required to be therapeutically endorsed. My reasons for this are as follows:

- The majority of patients I see with red eyes / ulcers can be successfully treated with chloramphenicol. Chloramphenicol is now available as an over the counter medication, and I have been able to treat patients successfully without being therapeutically trained.
- From discussion with glaucoma patients, it appears that they still prefer to be seen by an ophthalmologist.
- Only a few times a year would I refer to an ophthalmologist for a condition I am unable to treat due to the fact I am not therapeutically trained.
- Many optometrists that I know who are endorsed, barely write prescriptions since chloramphenicol is now available OTC.
- It would seem a costly and timely exercise for optometrists for the amount of times we would prescribe.
- It would be time consuming for ophthalmologists to further train and supervise another 3200 optometrists.
- Many optometrists only work part-time and bring in a limited wage while trying to raise a family. The cost and time constraints of studying and placements with ophthalmologists could be a burden for many.
- Those working part-time or only a day a week would see less patients, and therefore the likelihood of them seeing a patient that needs a prescription medication would be unlikely.
- I work as a locum and find some practices /demographics have a higher need for therapeutics. Others which appear to be a more a 'glasses factory' have very few patients coming in with eye complaints, other than needing glasses. So I believe it should be the individual optometrists decision on whether they want to be therapeutically endorsed, depending on their client base and need for it.