

Hi,

I would consider that the profession of optometry should deliver to a level of expertise including therapeutic treatments at some point in the future. Having a consistent offer / capability of the profession is an important dimension to the classification, expectation and public understanding of the role the profession undertakes. I also think there would be public health benefits to the community with Ophthalmologists more able to focus on difficult cases and taking some of the load off GP's who may not be as experienced as an Optometrist and find it difficult to provide the same level of care without specialised equipment that is required.

The complexity goes to how to implement such a significant change, the significance being quantified as;

A) the vast majority of Optometrists are not therapeutically endorsed (only 20%)

B) the magnitude of effort, time and cost required to be invested by the Optometrist to become therapeutically endorsed

One can not set a reasonable expectation for how long a period of grace should be until the logistics of point A are considered and the reality of point B are resolved.

In the current form of therapeutic training / endorsement programs, making therapeutic endorsement a requirement of registration is unreasonable.

Thoughts and considerations would need to be focussed at how to make this process more palatable to working optometrists.

Additionally the frequency and availability of courses offered would need to be reviewed to provide a realistic expectation of completion.

Furthermore the dependency on fellow professions such as Ophthalmologists and its practicalities need to be considered - both in terms of the potential conflict of interest from each party during assessment and the availability / access which is currently required.

Lastly an optometrist in a non-clinical role should not be required to have therapeutic endorsement as a requirement for registration.