

Subject: OBA Consultation on Therapeutics Requirement for Registration
Date: Friday, 4 February 2011 1:56:48 PM
Importance: High

To whom it may concern,

RE: OBA Consultation on Therapeutics Requirement for Registration

I would like to strongly voice my opinion in the negative for therapeutics being a requirement for registration as an Optometrist.

I am not interested in treating diseases. I feel that vision assessment, refraction, binocular investigation and detection of disease define Optometry and are already a major responsibility.

I feel treating diseases in the reality of private practice will be of little benefit to our profession and frankly be outweighed by the increase in professional indemnity premiums and possible litigation.

The public may benefit from not having to attend an Ophthalmologist, a specialist in treating eye diseases, but Optometrists would not benefit as it merely adds to our responsibilities and potentially dilutes focus on our primary function - being the correction of vision and detection of disease.

On this point, I find it quite curious that the art of refraction seems to be somewhat taken for granted when originally this was the mainstay of Optometry.

I think we need to remember that correct refraction is a valuable, and sometimes challenging skill that Optometrists should be absolutely expert at. It is equally imperative that disease detection skills be maintained for effective referral, but it is possible that with the addition of more responsibilities these fundamental skills may suffer, as there is a limited scope that anyone can concentrate on to the highest level.

I am sure most Optometrists could attest to the often less than perfect spectacle prescriptions obtained by Ophthalmologists as this is not their speciality, just as treating disease is not ours.

I am not suggesting that Optometrists should not have therapeutic qualifications. I would however, like the board to recognise that therapeutics is not the defining aspect of Optometry and as such should not be a requirement for registration, but an adjunct for those who wish to take on this extra responsibility and not coerce nor penalise those practitioners who choose to focus on traditional skills.

Thank you for your attention in this most important matter.

Yours Sincerely,
James Laird
