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## Academy Notebook

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### What's Happening

#### Questionnaire Results: Ophthalmologists Want to See More Patients

U.S. ophthalmologists examine an average of 116 patients each week, according to a recent Academy survey.

When asked if they would like to increase the number of patients they see each week, more than 50 percent of respondents replied in the affirmative. Assuming that support staff and resources are adequate, and that compensation is proportionate, ophthalmologists wish to increase patient load by an average of 33 percent.

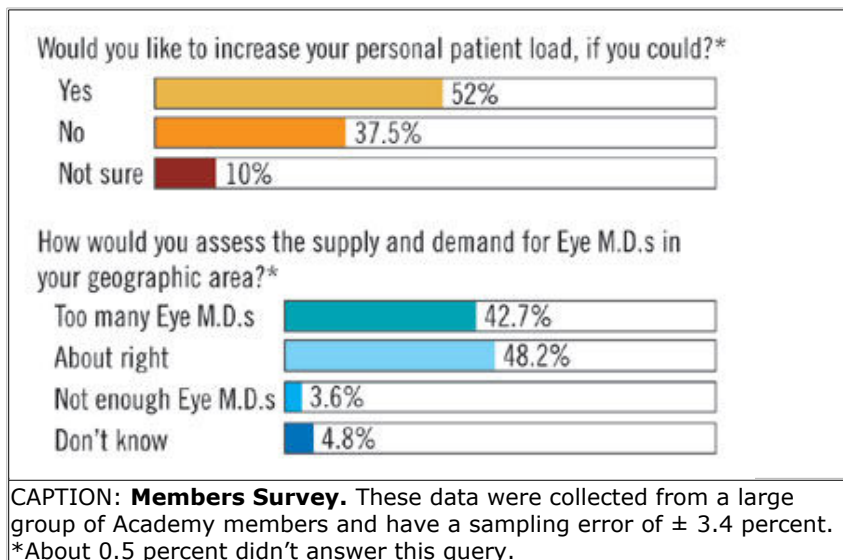
**Who wants more patients?** "The desire to grow the individual practice is fairly consistent between comprehensive ophthalmologists and subspecialists," reported Academy Secretary for Member Services Ruth D. Williams, MD. "Ophthalmologists in group practices are less inclined to wish for more patients than those in solo practice."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the ophthalmologists who most want to see more patients are those in the first five years of practice—almost 80 percent of whom want to increase patient volume. "These ophthalmologists, who are building up their practices, have the time and desire to see more patients per week," said Ravi D. Goel, MD, a member of the Academy's Young Ophthalmologists committee who is in private practice in Cherry Hill, N.J. "Many of them see fewer patients and have lower surgical volume than they did as a senior resident or fellow. They're not yet known in their community and, compared with their senior partners, are in fewer health plans and have fewer patient-to-patient referral sources."

**No shortage of ophthalmologists.** The supply and demand for ophthalmologists in the community is an issue that is closely related to patient load. "When asked if an oversupply of ophthalmologists exists, four in 10 (43 percent) agree and only 4 percent of respondents report a shortage of ophthalmologists in their community," Dr. Williams said. "Physicians in solo practice describe an oversupply more readily than those in group practice."

**So how does a new Eye M.D. build a practice?** "Remember the three A's of availability, affability and ability—in that order," said Dr. Goel. "To increase your number of patients per week to the national average, you need to be available to your patients and referring doctors as much as possible. Affability and great bedside (or slit lamp) manner are critical to building a successful practice. As young ophthalmologists have lighter schedules, they should spend more time with patients and build a rapport with them. And whether they know it or not, young doctors are on 'clinical probation' when they first enter a community. Your ability to treat and care for a patient is being constantly evaluated by your patients, their families and your fellow physicians."

**For more survey results,** visit [www.aao.org/archives](http://www.aao.org/archives) and select the February Academy Notebook for services that Eye M.D.s offer, January for Academy demographics and November/ December for practice problems. To read information for young ophthalmologists, visit [www.aao.org/yo](http://www.aao.org/yo).



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**FYI**

### A Thank You to Life Fellows and Members

To honor Academy members who have achieved the status of Life Fellow or Life Member, the Academy instituted some new acknowledgments in 2005.

At the 2005 Annual Meeting in Chicago, panels that listed the names of Life Fellows and Life Members were displayed in the lobby of the convention center. Also, an insert with a list of Life Fellow/Members was included in the November/December edition of *EyeNet Magazine*.

An updated list can be found online.

**To see the list**, visit [www.aao.org/member](http://www.aao.org/member). For questions about your membership, please contact Member Services by e-mail, [member\\_services@aao.org](mailto:member_services@aao.org), or by phone, 866-561-8558.

### Take Part in a Web Conference on Optical Dispensing—March 14

This month, the American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives will host its first Web conference—Optimizing Your Optical Dispensary: Profit Potential, Pearls and Pitfalls.

Presenter Art De Gennaro will offer advice on integrating the dispensary into the medical practice, benchmarks, inventory control, pricing and marketing. The Web conference will be delivered live over the telephone, and you will be able to view the speaker's slides online as he presents, and participate in interactive surveys.

It will take place on Tuesday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to noon PST. The fee is \$130 for members of the AAOE or Academy (\$165 for nonmembers), and your practice pays only once, regardless of the number of people participating.

If you are unable to attend the event, a compact disc will be available for purchase afterward. This CD will include both the audio and slides.

**For more information** on this month's Web conference, visit [www.aao.org/aaoe](http://www.aao.org/aaoe).

### Sign Up for the MOC Exam Review Course

Are you preparing to take the American Board of Ophthalmology's closed-book exam (the DOCK)? This review course is based on the Practicing Ophthalmologists Curriculum (POC), the same content that the ABO uses to develop the DOCK questions. Featuring instructors who created the POC, the course takes place in the Chicago area, July 21–23.

**To learn more**, visit [www.aao.org/review\\_course](http://www.aao.org/review_course).

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## Washington Report

### The CDC's National Vision Program

As the U.S. population ages, vision-related health problems are becoming more prevalent. In response, the Centers for Disease Control established the National Vision Program. Ophthalmologist Jinan Saaddine, MD, MPH, is the program's team leader.

**Core components of the NVP.** The program will provide monitoring of both vision impairment and access to eye care; provide technical and scientific assistance to organizations that work to protect and enhance vision; help providers and payers to incorporate research findings into clinical practice; and analyze relevant economic issues, such as the cost effectiveness of methods to identify and prevent vision loss.

**Academy helps states to monitor vision impairment and access to eye care.** The state health departments of New York and Texas—aided by critical funding from the Academy—have added a vision module to statewide health surveys. They are two of the first five states to do so. The states conduct these surveys under contract with the CDC as part of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, which is a long-standing system of health surveys that compiles data about health risk behaviors, clinical preventive practices and health care access and use. The module of vision questions was developed by the CDC, with the help of epidemiologists and ophthalmologists, as part of the NVP. The questions focus on age-related eye diseases—including retinopathy, glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataract—as well as work-related injuries. Before the vision module was developed, the CDC's public health agenda for vision loss was limited to diabetes.

**What next for the NVP?** In April, the program will host a strategic planning meeting to help define a comprehensive coordinated public health action plan for the CDC. Alfred Sommer, MD, will chair this meeting of vision experts.

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## Academy Store

### New Waiting Room DVD Features 15 Short Presentations

Use the new *Waiting Room DVD for the Ophthalmic Practice* to educate your patients about common eye conditions and treatments.

It features 15 brief presentations, including *How to Insert Eye Drops, Cataract and Floaters and Flashes*. These include animated graphics and physician explanations to inform your patients and their family members about eye care.

The entire DVD lasts approximately one hour and plays on a continuous loop. It also features a subtitle option for the convenience of office staff.

The *Waiting Room* DVD (Product #050110) costs \$205 for members, \$276 for nonmembers.

**For more information**, or to order, visit [www.aao.org/store](http://www.aao.org/store) or phone 866-561-8558.

### Use a CD-ROM to Audit Your Practice's Use of E&M Codes

AAOE's new *E&M Internal Chart Auditor for Ophthalmology* is an easy-to-use, interactive CD-ROM.

It is designed to help your practice verify that the level of service is accurately coded. After using the tool to confirm the correct level of E&M code, you can print the audit results for your practice's compliance file.

The CD-ROM also comes with a short booklet containing chart auditing examples and a discussion of three key E&M documentation components—history, examination and medical decision making.

*E&M Internal Chart Auditor for Ophthalmology* (#012305) costs \$150 for members, \$203 for nonmembers.

**For more information**, or to order, visit [www.aao.org/store](http://www.aao.org/store) or phone 861-561-8558.

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## Meeting Matters

### Beat the Deadline for ISRS/AO Istanbul Registration

This year's meeting, *International Refractive Surgery: Art and Science*, will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, May 26 to 28. The advance registration deadline is April 5. Prices will increase by \$50 onsite.

**More information** is available online at [www.isrs.org/istabul](http://www.isrs.org/istabul).

### Las Vegas 2006

Join your colleagues in this one-of-a-kind city for the Joint Meeting of the Academy and the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology, which takes place at Sands Expo at the Venetian, Nov. 11 to 14.

The Joint Meeting is preceded by the Academy's Subspecialty Day, Nov. 10 to 11, which will feature meetings in glaucoma, refractive surgery and retina.

**For updates** on the Joint Meeting and Subspecialty Day, visit [www.aao.org/annual\\_meeting](http://www.aao.org/annual_meeting).

### Seven Highlights of the 2006 Joint Meeting

Four new joint sessions will take place in 2006, each featuring speakers from both the United States and countries represented by the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology. Topics for these sessions will include:

- Myopia
- Angle-closure glaucoma
- *East Meets West*—comparisons of clinical procedures
- *East Meets West*—comparisons of business procedures

The Joint Meeting also will feature several new symposia, including:

- *Innovative Techniques* for Eyelid, Lacrimal, Orbit and Facial Surgery
- *Treatment of Retinal Vascular Diseases*
- *Around the World in 60 Minutes*—a new annual session focusing on different techniques from around the world. The inaugural topic is phakic IOLs.

### Submit Your Paper, Poster and Video Abstracts by April 11

The abstract submission period for scientific papers, posters, videos and exhibits will open on Wednesday, March 15, and close Tuesday, April 11.

If you plan to submit a video, the abstract is due on April 11, and the Academy must receive the actual video (on DVD) by Friday, April 28.

All abstracts must be submitted online at [www.aao.org/annual\\_meeting](http://www.aao.org/annual_meeting).

Be sure to read the guidelines before you submit your abstract.

Submissions for instruction courses and labs closed on Jan. 10.

**If you need further information**, e-mail [meetings@aao.org](mailto:meetings@aao.org) or phone 415-447-0343.

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## Members at Large

### Penn. and N.J. State Leaders Tag Team on Resident Education

"It's critical to educate residents about some of the nonmedical aspects of practicing medicine and engage them early in their careers about getting politically active," said **David S. Pao, MD**, a recent graduate of the Academy's Leadership Development Program (LDP) and one of three Academy councilors who represent the **Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology**.

To that end, Dr. Pao joined leaders of the **New Jersey Academy of Ophthalmology (NJAIO)** in presenting a residents' advocacy program in Philadelphia on Dec. 12. The

audience included residents from the teaching programs of Wills Eye Hospital, Scheie Eye Institute, Temple University Hospital and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Dr. Pao brought local residents up to speed by presenting Pennsylvania's legislative update, which also included references to the national scene and activities in Oklahoma.

**Michael E. Sulewski, MD**, presented background on the efforts of the Veterans Eye Treatment Safety coalition, which scored a victory for patient safety when a Dec. 17, 2004, VA directive rescinded an earlier directive that permitted optometrists to perform laser eye surgery at VA health care facilities. Dr. Sulewski—who is Scheie Eye Institute's codirector of cornea service and director of refractive service, as well as chief of ophthalmology, Veterans Affairs Medical Center of Philadelphia—said that the performance of therapeutic laser surgery in the VA system is now limited to qualified ophthalmologists.

**Ravi D. Goel, MD**, spoke about his experiences with the Academy's LDP as a 2003–2004 graduate, the Academy's Surgery by Surgeons effort, scope of practice and patient safety. Dr. Goel said, "My goal is to get residents energized to participate in the legislative arena. No matter what the specialty or subspecialty, these topics will confront young ophthalmologists for years to come. Any scope of practice issue being fought in one state will inevitably affect their own community."

Clean-up hitter **Ralph C. Lanciano Jr., DO**, councilor and past president of the NJAO, presented the history and present situation in comanagement.

"I think we were successful in keeping the residents' interest with both the topics and culinary delights," said Dr. Pao, who is president-elect of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology.

## Who's In the News

*The Times* interviewed **Jack M. Chapman, MD**, for an article on tort reform that appeared in the Jan. 15 edition of the Gainesville, Ga., newspaper.

*The Puget Sound Business Journal* named **Aaron P. Weingeist, MD**, as one of its 2005 "40 Under 40 Honorees" for his business and community involvement, including his legislative efforts on behalf of the Academy and the Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons.



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