

Joseph Dello Russo, MD

Dr. Dello Russo shares his thoughts on conquering presbyopia and his desire to leave his practice to his sons.



Having been involved in the testing and approval of excimer laser technology, what new techniques do you think will have the greatest impact on vision?

The solution to presbyopia is likely on the horizon. Ophthalmologists have succeeded at eliminating eyewear for distance vision. Next, we need to get rid of reading glasses. True presbyopic correction is probably several years off. Whoever achieves this goal is going to have a lot of fun and open up an entirely new field for ophthalmologists.

Since you opened eye surgery centers in New York and New Jersey in 1979, how has the cataract and refractive surgery market changed?

Soon after I opened my ambulatory surgery center (ASC), Medicare and medical insurance carriers recognized that ambulatory, in-office cataract surgery would become the standard of care and eventually began to pay for ambulatory cataract surgeries. Today, they only pay for hospital admission when cataract surgery is performed on patients who need monitoring in a hospital setting. The ambulatory style of surgery has spread to almost every branch of medicine where a specific ambulatory procedure is possible. There are many benefits to performing cataract surgery at an ASC, including convenience for the patient and the doctor and cost savings for patients and insurance carriers.

What is unique about the way you run your ASCs in New York and New Jersey?

Running the centers is a family affair for my wife, my two sons, and myself. We take a hands-on approach with our patients, despite the fact that we employ three other subspecialists and a staff of more than 50 individuals. My family is integrated into the practice in all of the ASCs. We work a lot, because we love the practice and our patients.

What has been your most memorable international experience?

It occurred under Parisian skies in 1982. After spending the day watching Danièle S. Aron-Rosa, MD, perform

Nd: YAG laser posterior capsulotomies, we had a lavish dinner with several other doctors. Another memorable event was dinner on the rooftop garden of the Hotel Forum in Rome, overlooking the Roman Forum. With me were Charles Munnerlyn, PhD; Stephen Trokel, MD; and Terry Clapham, the innovators of the Visx excimer laser system (Abbott Medical Optics Inc., Santa Ana, CA).

What would you like to accomplish over the next 5 years?

It is my personal goal to smoothly pass my multicenter, multidisciplinary practice on to my two sons, who have already been with the practice for 8 years. ■

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