

Meetings and Educational Offerings We Most Value

I Appreciate a Variety of Educational Avenues

BY R. DOYLE STULTING, MD, PhD



Thirty years ago, the average ophthalmologist in the United States probably attended the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and occasionally read a journal. The United States was clearly the leader in medical technology; the Internet did not exist; access to video recordings was limited; and few "throw-away" publications were published.

VARIETY OF AVENUES

Today, there is a vast array of educational opportunities, including popular offerings like the one you are reading, in addition to classic, peer-reviewed journals and annual meetings of major US professional organizations. International meetings have become more attractive, as the US regulatory environment drives innovative product development outside of the country. The Internet has put information at our

fingertips that once required access to a university library. Advances in electronic devices have allowed us to review a virtually unlimited amount of written material, images, and videos at a time and location of our choice. Finally, our learning experience is continually changing as demographic shifts occur, with some suggesting that the upcoming generation will prefer to learn at home via electronic communications rather than attend meetings.

As a baby boomer adapting to this new environment, I find myself learning from a variety of sources. International meetings are attractive, because they expose me to innovative ideas, the outcomes of clinical trials that cannot be performed in the United States, and conversations with physicians who are 10 years ahead of us in terms of the availability of new technology. The annual meeting of the European Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons and the Australasian Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons are two of my favorites. In the United States, I find the annual American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery meeting most informative, because it focuses on my areas of interest, attracts international ophthalmologists, and encourages the presentation of novel ideas.

LEARNING IN THE NEW DIGITAL "E-VOLUTION"

The editors of Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today asked our readers to tell us about the digital resources they use for learning and their views on the importance of video for education.

"The surgical management of glaucoma and cataract is rapidly evolving. By consuming a steady diet of Eyetube.net surgical videos, I have been able to adopt fantastic new techniques into my surgical armamentarium on a continuous basis."

— **Nathan Radcliffe, MD**

"As a resident only 10 years ago, much of my surgical education was based on text, diagrams, and schematics in books. Today, with thousands of high-quality narrated videos on websites like youtube.com and Eyetube.net, multimedia interactive apps such as *MillennialEYE*, and a variety of available hyperrealistic surgery simulations, surgical education is more effective than ever before. We encourage our residents and fellows to take advantage of these tremendous resources, and I, too, have found them invaluable when learning new techniques."

— **Christopher E. Starr, MD**

LEARNING IN THE NEW DIGITAL "E-VOLUTION"

"Surgical videos are crucial and important resources. As a resident, I remember videotaping every single case I performed. [Thereafter], I would review each case multiple times (by myself and with fellow residents and/or attending physicians). I would even bring the tapes back to my hometown over holidays to review with my father (at the time, a practicing ophthalmologist). This was back in the day of VCRs, which made it a bit cumbersome to review cases."

Good cases were like gold among residents, and tapes would be passed down year to year showing particular key techniques or common pitfalls to avoid. Eventually, the tape would be lost or broken or replayed too many times, and the quality would drop. With the advent of modern digital recording equipment and online resources like Eyetube.net, videos can be recorded, stored, and played from almost anywhere in world within minutes. Physicians can pull up the video on a handheld device or smartphone and review a technique minutes before stepping into an OR to perform the technique."

— **William F. Wiley, MD**

"When I need to reference a case or review a surgery, I am not always sitting at my desk where I can flip through a journal. Often, I am about to walk into the OR with a challenging case, and I want to review a surgical step with the trusted content found on Eyetube.net. I commend Bryn Mawr Communications for moving the ball forward with Eyetube.net and *Millennial/EYE*. May the e-revolution continue!"

— **Damien F. Goldberg, MD**

"Like ophthalmic surgery, ophthalmic media are rapidly evolving toward a digital form. From imaging to surgical equipment to education, the digital age is upon us and drives what we do. Though the written word is often the most effective way of expressing thought and inspiration, no one can deny the power of digital media. Eyetube.net and *Millennial/EYE* exemplify this movement, transforming how eye surgeons access relevant information instantly."

— **George O. Waring IV, MD**

"Just like I read *Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today* cover to cover, so do I side swipe, down scroll, and tap my way through all the megabytes worth of knowledge in *Millennial/EYE*."

— **Tal Raviv, MD**

"Small advancements in surgical techniques or technologies can easily make large impressions in disease diagnosis and management. For me, learning is a dynamic and visual process, and I love being able to tap into digital platforms like Eyetube.net and *Millennial/EYE* to learn how I can do things better."

— **Elizabeth Yeu, MD**

"There has been a rapid evolution in surgical techniques in all areas of ophthalmic surgery. Even more importantly, innovators have developed new techniques to handle complicated situations. The ability to view these surgical cases on Eyetube.net posted by surgeons from around the world has allowed me to continue to expand my surgical knowledge. This has resulted in tangible benefits to my patients' visual outcomes."

— **William B. Trattler, MD**

ONLINE LEARNING

My laptop is central to my current educational process. Push technology gives me access to papers before they appear in print. I can even attend meetings in cyberspace that I did not attend in person, listen to a paper that I missed when it was presented at a national meeting, and hear about a clinical study from the European Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons meeting that cannot be performed in the United States because of regulatory hurdles.

CONCLUSION

One of the increasingly attractive new ways of learning for me are the 1-minute learning experiences that come

to my iPhone (Apple, Inc.) via push technology—the brief video from the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery or other societies that appears in my inbox. I believe these preselected, tightly edited learning opportunities are the wave of the future. The obvious key to their success is the knowledge and lack of bias of the entity that selects and publishes these offerings.

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I Favor Intimate, Innovative Symposia

BY GEORGE O. WARING IV, MD



Like all things ophthalmic, meetings have changed significantly over the years. I remember my first experiences as a young child, being led toward the front row of the early refractive surgery meetings by my father. I was humbled and awed by the innovative spirit of the pioneers that have mentored many of us. Since that time, many of the large international meetings have stifled their innovative spirit in order to comply with continuing medical education regulations.

In recent years, new organizations have been founded in that spirit of innovation, and they have spawned an era of small symposia focused on the latest technology. Although I may choose to attend a meeting based on its individual merit and focus, I have come to value these more intimate meetings the most. The American-European Congress of Ophthalmic Surgery has three meetings a year, with a concentration on advances in ophthalmic surgery. The International Congress on Surface Ablation, Femto-Lasers, & Cross-Linking is a joint congress following the summer American-European Congress of Ophthalmic Surgery meeting, and it has an obvious focus on the eponymous disciplines but specifically on the latest research and developments. Similarly, the Wavefront & Presbyopic Refractive Corrections Congress embodies these avant-garde, cutting-edge concepts but from an optical science standpoint. I find this to be a valuable meeting with top-level thinkers and enjoy the balance it provides to the more clinically oriented meetings.

I am a devout supporter of large international congresses and consider these to be the "gold standard" meetings. More and more, though, I have come to value the more innovative and less regulated atmosphere that the smaller symposia provide. They remind me of my early experiences at the pioneering meetings that discussed new concepts and new developments in a less formal setting. ■

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