

THE POWER OF CHOICE IN AN ERA OF RAPID INNOVATION



Our world is changing at an unprecedented pace. Not long ago, video conferencing was a novelty—a brief experiment. By 2020, it was woven into the fabric of daily medical practice. The rapid integration mirrors the evolution of other groundbreaking technologies—from smartphones to advanced imaging systems—that have reshaped our profession.

During my career, I have witnessed the transformations of cataract surgery planning and patient selection and the expansion of lens options. Gradual improvements have given way to leaps in technology and methodology. The surge compels us to rethink how we approach clinical challenges.

We surgeons can influence the direction of innovation by actively engaging in the cycle of discovery, development, and refinement. By collaborating closely with industry partners from the early stages of product development, we can help ensure that new technologies are not only cutting-edge but also practical and sustainable. With robust data at our fingertips, we can educate our peers and drive transformative change in patient care on a global scale.

The way we share knowledge has also evolved. Gone are the days when the exchange of ideas was limited to in-person meetings and regional conferences. Webinars and virtual platforms connect us with experts and innovators around the world in real time. This connectivity enriches our collective understanding, elevates the standard of care, and disseminates best practices rapidly and efficiently.

Diversity in our approaches to innovation is essential. The perspectives of physicians from different backgrounds and locations are key to addressing unmet needs. Through organizations such as YoungMD Connect, the Young Eye Surgeon Committee, and the Young Ophthalmologists' Committee, our commitment to nurturing emerging talent allows fresh ideas to drive our field forward.

The challenge ahead is clear: How do we sustain a dynamic pace of change? It starts with proactive, forward-thinking decision-making from the outset. We must evaluate new technologies not just for their immediate impact but also for their long-term sustainability by considering factors such as payer support, regulatory pathways, user-friendliness, patient acceptance, and even environmental impact.

Our collective future depends on building a network of innovators, collaborators, and thought leaders. By encouraging young ophthalmologists to adopt an innovation mindset early in their training and continuously fostering collaborative efforts, we can position ourselves to meet the evolving needs of our patients. We owe it to the next generation of surgeons to create an ecosystem that supports rapid, responsible transformation—one that is as diverse as the patients we serve. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathleen M. McCabe'.

CATHLEEN M. MCCABE, MD
CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR