

The importance of 'hands-on' learning

Providing ongoing professional education and development for the allied professions out of the clinic or hospital setting is often quite challenging. The reorganisation of rotas, heavy clinic lists and financial constraints all add up to making the opportunity to learn 'outside of the work setting' more difficult.

Since 2010 the United Kingdom & Ireland Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons (UKISCRS) has provided an Allied Professions (UKISOP) day in parallel to their annual meeting. The days have received positive feedback, though the request for more 'hands-on' learning is a repeated one.

This year the annual UKISCRS meeting is a joint congress with the European Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) and, due to the planning and logistics of these two meetings, a UKISOP day is not feasible.

To ensure momentum is not lost, by not providing an educational day for professions allied to ophthalmology, the UKISOP team looked at other opportunities. The idea to run a more practical session in a shorter timeline (as per delegate feedback) was created. UKISOP felt this would provide a 'constant' in the UK educational diary, whilst making it more accessible to the delegate.

The planning committee: Lorraine North (UKISOP President) Rebecca Turner (Nurse Lead), Sathish Srinivasan (UKISOP Consultant Lead / University Hospital Ayr) and myself Gill Wood got together to discuss the main priorities for learning and how best to provide this.

Using delegate feedback we ascertained that the workshops should be:

- centrally located
- at the start or end of a day to allow for working time
- free!

The UKISOP workshops have therefore been designed as a 'snap-shot' learning experience, a 'taster session' and have clear and specific objectives.

The workshops and the objectives

There will be three workshops running in 30-minute rotations with a maximum of eight allied professions in each group. The topics are: biometry, slit-lamps and optical coherence tomography (OCT).



Carl Zeiss IOL Master.

Biometry

'Optical biometry using the Zeiss IOL Master 500 in a flash!'

This session, sponsored by Carl Zeiss, will provide the delegate with an overview of what measurements are required for biometry, how they are taken, and how they are used to calculate the power of the intraocular lens (IOL) for optimised patient outcomes using the Zeiss IOL Master 500.

The IOL Master will be projected to ensure all delegates can observe the instrument as measurements and calculations are performed and explained. The target audience is ophthalmic health professionals who perform biometry or may do so in the future.

The training will be delivered by Lyn Millbank (Orthoptist DOBA (AUS), Head of Training and Applications Support Team, Carl Zeiss Ltd).

Emma Scarlet of Carl Zeiss says:

"Zeiss are committed to providing high quality education and employ allied professionals, such as orthoptists, as part of the Zeiss Academy UK team. Their specialist experience is invaluable when delivering educational sessions such as workshops and lectures, as they can fully relate to the demands of working in a busy clinical environment."

Slit-lamps

The session, sponsored by Haag-Streit, demonstrates how the slit-lamp allows a detailed binocular examination of the anterior segment of the eye. Fundamental slit-lamp investigations can only be achieved with a familiarity with the instrument, understanding of the eye's anatomy and extensive practice. The objectives of the workshop are:

- to understand the principals and illumination techniques used for slit-lamp examination
- to be aware of the settings on the slit-lamp to perform an examination of the ocular structures
- to introduce further clinical investigations using the slit-lamp.



Haag-Streit Slit-Lamp.

The slit-lamp workshop is presented by Sam Laidlaw, Product Manager, Haag-Streit UK. Sam is a registered orthoptist and has worked in a variety of extended roles within the NHS.

Grahame Wood, National Sales Manager Haag Streit, says: "Haag-Streit are happy to support the allied profession workshops with our gold standard slit-lamps. We will be taking the opportunity also to extend the learning of the delegates by displaying the Lenstar biometer at this subspecialty meeting."

Optical coherence tomography (OCT)

'From the front to the back with OCT' – sponsored by Topcon UK Ltd.

This interactive workshop will explore beneath the corneal and retinal surface to uncover how OCT can enhance patient care by enabling early detection and monitoring of ocular abnormalities. OCT interpretation will be discussed, and common retinal and corneal abnormalities will be presented. There will be an opportunity to get 'hands-on' with the current commercially available OCT scanners and see how easy it is to not only produce high quality retinal images, but also capture anterior scans which will give information on corneal thickness and curvature and anterior chamber angle.

The learning objectives are:

- to understand the range of scanning abilities of current OCT scanners
- to understand how OCT can help with post-cataract care
- to identify pathology in OCT scans
- to be able to capture and interpret both anterior and posterior OCT images.

Dr Rachel Hiscox, delivering the



Topcon OCT.

workshop, is an optometrist and clinical affairs specialist at Topcon. Prior to joining Topcon, she worked in both private practice and hospital optometry and recently completed a PhD at Cardiff University.

Lorraine North, UKISOP President & Consultant Orthoptist / Research Lead, Frimley Park Hospital NHS Trust, comments: "I am frequently either emailed or approached at meetings by delegates for more 'hands-on' formal teaching that will contribute towards their competency portfolios. Whilst many allied health professionals obtain the majority of their training during every day working practice, running workshops gives them the opportunity to ask in depth questions and be shown practically any aspect that they would like a refresher on or are even not sure about in a comfortable environment with their peers.

"These 'taster sessions' will enable us to offer more workshops in the future by understanding the requirements of our audience and allow us to facilitate and

develop their extended roles. Whether it is as a beginner or an advanced practitioner, the workshops will have something for everybody.

"UKISOP are very grateful to our sponsors for providing these 'taster sessions' and we look forward to planning more in the future."

Where, when and how?

The workshops will run on Monday 19 May at the Thinktank Museum, Birmingham in parallel to the UKISCRS Cornea & Cataract Subspecialty day. This precedes the Royal College of Ophthalmology meeting also in Birmingham.

The sessions will run in a rotation of three, on a 30-minute timeline with the first to start at 4pm. The sessions are completely free to attend (though a refundable deposit of £25 is requested to secure your place). The maximum in any group will be eight to ensure hands-on learning. Delegates are invited to attend from 2pm, and alongside visiting the small exhibition can also attend the afternoon Cataract session of the UKISCRS subspecialty day, should they wish to increase the learning experience.

For all details and to book contact Gill Wood.

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