

Re:View

Keeping excellence in your sights | November 2014 | Issue 19

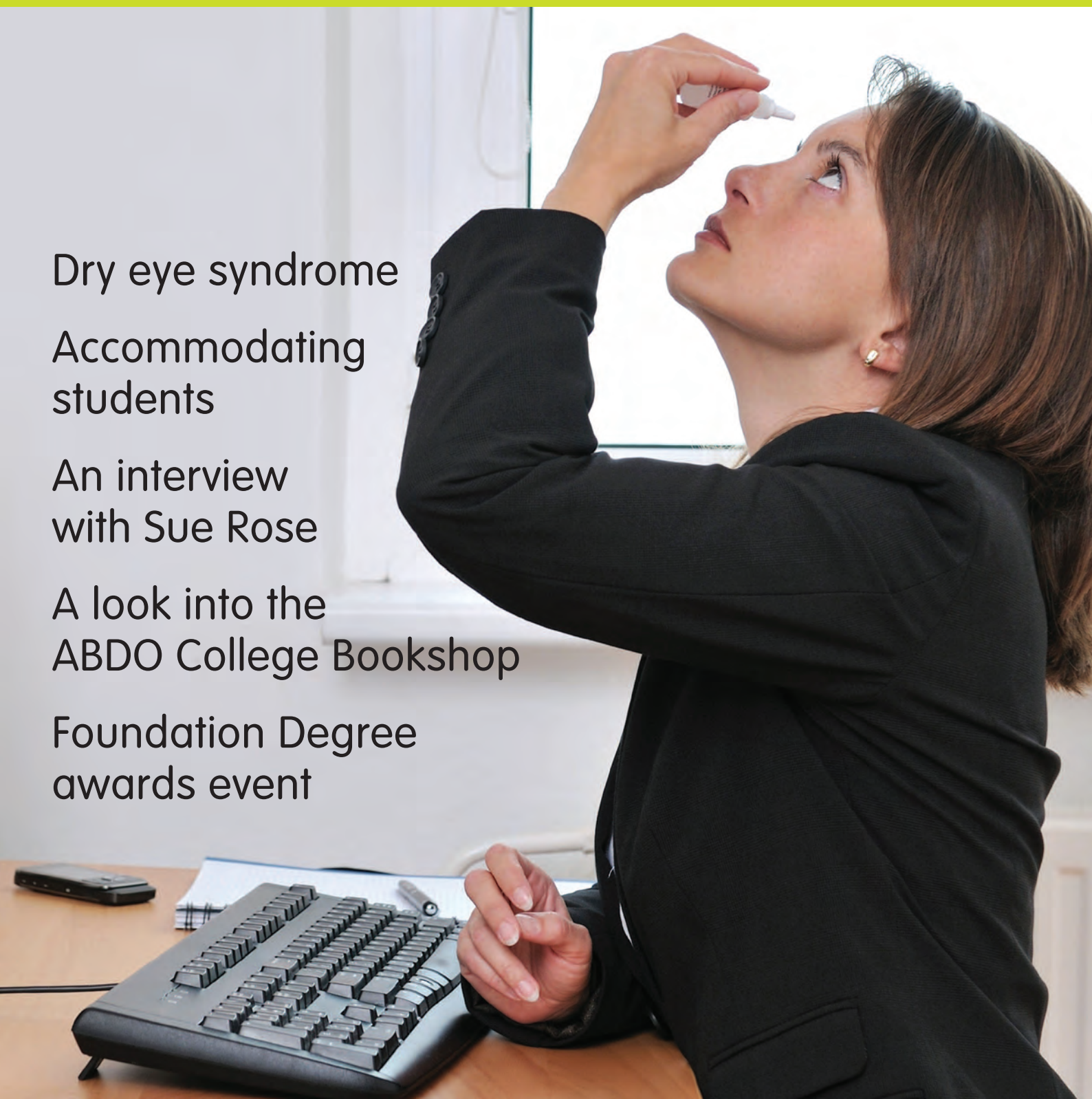
Dry eye syndrome

Accommodating
students

An interview
with Sue Rose

A look into the
ABDO College Bookshop

Foundation Degree
awards event



Looking after our students



This issue of *Re:View* very much has the theme of looking after our students. Joan Griffin takes you through the great lengths that she and her team go to ensure that the students have suitable and comfortable accommodation during their block release stays. This not only applies to the superb facilities on site at

Godmersham but also for those students who prefer Bed & Breakfast at one of the local hostelrys. I must agree that the Woolpack in Chilham certainly has its attractions!

Of course studying is that much easier with the appropriate books to hand and Justin Hall explains what is on offer at the ABDO Bookshop that's based here at the College. The Bookshop not only offers titles for students but for all involved in the optical profession through to ophthalmologists both here and abroad. I think that mighty tome *Ophthalmic Lens Availability* is a must for every practice.

Sue Rose tells us of the many hats she wears at Godmersham. When not getting the rooms ready for lectures and workshops, teaching practical ophthalmic lenses and managing reception, she is also in the process of preparing to sit her contact lens

practical exams. I was exhausted just reading her interview!

This attention to detail in the education and welfare of our students highlights ABDO College's total dedication to providing the very best for those students in attaining the goals expected, not only by themselves but also their employers.

Finally, I was devastated not to be able to attend the Foundation Degree awards event in September. Whilst congratulating the successful students and of course the staff, seeing the pictures in this issue of everybody enjoying themselves in the College grounds in glorious late-summer sunshine, glass in hand, has not improved my mood! Oh well there is always next year, enjoy your read.

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Accommodating students

Where to stay while you study at ABDO College

ABDO College is situated in beautiful Kent countryside, and there is accommodation on site available to students on block release. Many students opt for this due to its handy location. It also gives you the chance to get to know fellow students. Other students like to stay off site for a break from the course. Read on to find out more about the accommodation options, both on and off site.



ABDO College offers eleven single rooms and three twin rooms for students. The accommodation is within a converted barn, looking out onto fields, just a few hundred yards walk past fields of sheep to the main building where classes take place at Godmersham. Joan Griffin is responsible for the accommodation. She says, "When you enter on your first day as a new student I'll probably be there to welcome you. I arrange some food for new first year arrivals and will be there for a few hours to make sure everyone settles in. When you arrive, you'll find a communal kitchen and living area. The kitchen is equipped just like a

home, with microwave, dishwasher and washing machine. In the living area you can relax with fellow students and watch a DVD on the large screen TV." After Joan has shown new students round the shared facilities she'll take them to their allocated bedroom. She says, "Each room is simply furnished, with everything a student might need: a bed, desk and wardrobe, plus small TV and DVD player. All the rooms have en suite bathrooms with bath or shower too."

ABDO College accommodation is popular choice with students. Joan explains, "Those coming from farther afield like the fact that they can walk

to classes and don't need a car. The accommodation fills quickly, and we find recommendations spread by word of mouth. Once students have been in the accommodation a little while they get together and work as a group. This might mean cooking together in the evening. Everything is provided for a self-service breakfast and lunch is provided in the main building, but I'll often find by the second day the students have filled the fridge for an evening meal in their accommodation, even accompanied by beer or wine." Joan continues, "A housekeeper comes in every day to look after the communal areas, and she does a changeover every Friday. Towels and basic household essentials are provided but we do recommend students bring their own washing powder in case of allergies."

Almost every student now comes to ABDO College with a laptop or tablet, and the College accommodation is equipped with Wi-Fi. It is a good base to get to know people. Joan says,

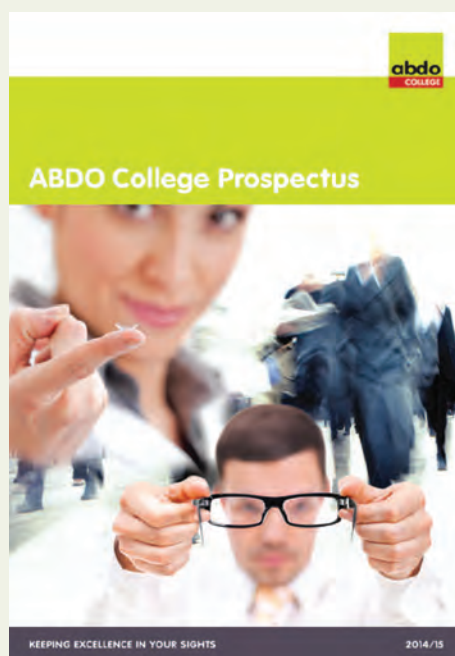


Joan Griffin

"Most the students stay in touch, but the accommodation allows you to get to know people a lot more. They bond well and help one another with their studies. Many students stay over the middle weekend of their block if they don't have to work. The College is well located for a trip to France if you bring your passport with you: one step down the road you can jump on the ferry. We know that students staying in College accommodation always have a big celebration on their last fortnight of block release too."

College accommodation may not be everyone's choice. Joan says, "I keep a list of smaller bed and breakfasts in the local area, and many students like to stay in the accommodation at the Conningbrook Hotel, a pub just a few miles down the road." Joan looks after all aspects of the accommodation, and she says, "If anyone is uncomfortable with their choice they just need to come and talk to me." Joan combines her job looking after the accommodation with the role of student and tutor support, as well as managing the course teams. She says, "I speak to most students right from when they first register. I'm here if any issues arise, whether they are accommodation issues or academic issues. If I can't help you solve a problem,

I'll find someone who can. ABDO College is a small college, but that means everyone is looked on as an individual, and we're committed to making your time at the College a great experience."



Resources

Find out more about studying and staying at ABDO College in the College Prospectus, downloadable from the website at <http://www.abdocollege.org.uk/> For a list of smaller B&Bs, and if you have any questions, call Joan Griffin on 01227 733 911, or email accommodation@abdocollege.org.uk.

Staying at B&B accommodation

Michelle Hamilton comes from the west of Scotland. She says, "When I decided to do the course at ABDO College, I knew that I didn't want to share a room. I looked for a Bed & Breakfast where I could have some luxuries while being away from home. I researched online to find what was available nearby and selected B&B at the Woolpack Inn. I phoned them to find how easy it would be to get to the College without a car, and the owner kindly offered to take me the first morning. After that I got a lift from another student who was also staying in Chilham.

I had all the comforts I needed at the B&B, and I stayed there every time I came down for block release. It is a family run place which I liked. I got to know them and they remembered me every time. If you are considering what accommodation to choose, do research online. Think about whether you like your own company or want to be part of a crowd, whether you like relaxing in the evening or want to go out in Ashford. If you are happy with your own company Bed & Breakfast accommodation could be the best choice for you."

Staying at ABDO College

Dan Varcoe travelled all the way from Cornwall at the start of his course at ABDO College. He says, "After a six hour drive I went straight to the accommodation, and saw right away I'd come to a lovely place. There were only three or four other students who had arrived at the same time, but

'Most the students stay in touch, but the accommodation allows you to get to know people a lot more. They bond well and help one another with their studies.'

Joan gave us all a warm welcome and provided some food which helped us settle in."

Choosing accommodation at the College seemed the easiest route for Dan. He says, "I signed up for the course in good time and the course and accommodation seemed to fit well together. I wanted to meet similar people in my situation and the College accommodation was great for getting to know people. The room had everything that I needed. In the first year I shared a room, but in fact the person I shared with was rarely there, and after that I got a single room.

It was great to have people to study with when we needed to work, and to socialise with the rest of the time. I had my car with me so we could go to the local pub quiz, or further afield. We had a couple of nights out in Canterbury, and once when we were there over a bank holiday we went to Thorpe Park. There was a real range of ages and backgrounds staying in the accommodation but everyone got on well." Dan felt that the accommodation provided everything he needed to successfully complete his block. He says, "The documentation provided in advance is good so I knew what I needed to bring. There's even Wi-Fi available now which wasn't an option when I started." Since graduating Dan has also completed his optometry qualification and is starting work in a practice in Cornwall where he can combine his dispensing and clinical skills.

A look into the ABDO College Bookshop

Justin Hall runs the ABDO College Bookshop, your first port of call whether you want to buy text books for a course or update your in-practice reference books. In this article we chat to Justin about what the Bookshop offer for students, qualified DOs, and other professionals. Read on to find out more about the Bookshop and how to use it.



Justin Hall

"The ABDO College Bookshop offers a broad and growing range of optical and ophthalmic books", Justin says. "We currently offer around 120 titles and sell books to students, both UK and abroad, those who are training at ABDO College and at the other educational establishments. The Bookshop also sells books to qualified dispensing opticians, ophthalmologists, optometrists and other professionals interested in the field, so the range of titles on offer takes this audience into account." Justin makes a point of

staying in touch with new and revised editions of relevant books so the Bookshop should always have what you need. He says, "New titles are assessed by ABDO College's academic staff to see if it would be helpful to add them to the Bookshop."

Many books are kept in stock at the Bookshop, particularly at busy times of year, with less frequently requested titles on next day order from the suppliers. The ABDO College Bookshop also sells packs of books for specific courses, so you can order everything you need for the Dispensing Diploma, Foundation Degree, BSc, Contact Lens or Low Vision courses, right down to the ABDO frame rule. The Bookshop offers more than just textbooks too, from anatomy charts to the college scarf, the British National Formulary to individual British Standards, revision guides, facial measurement gauges, and a selection of optical test charts.

Finding the book you want

You'll find the Bookshop online ordering pages on the ABDO College site at www.abdocollege.org.uk, and the first

things you will come across are the course-specific packs of books. Just scroll down through those and you can browse through all individual books and other products in alphabetical order by title. Alternatively, go to the top bar and search by category, such as contact lenses or low vision, or search alphabetically with part of a title or author's name.

Speedy service

Single books ordered from the ABDO College Bookshop are sent by first class post, while a pack of book goes next day delivery by Parcelforce. Justin says, "We also get orders from all round the globe from people studying national courses or ABDO courses overseas. We use traceable services to send books overseas."

For any book order received by half past three Justin aims for next day delivery. He adds, "September and October are the busiest times for the ABDO College Bookshop because so many people are starting new courses and ordering packs of text books. While we aim for a next day service, this is the time when everyone orders their books. You may get your books the next day, but we can't always guarantee it during this busy period."

Price is always an issue when running a modern bookshop. Justin says, "We don't try to compete with the ever changing prices offered by big online book stores but we do try to keep as many books as possible below RRP." The web is making an ongoing difference to the way the Bookshop

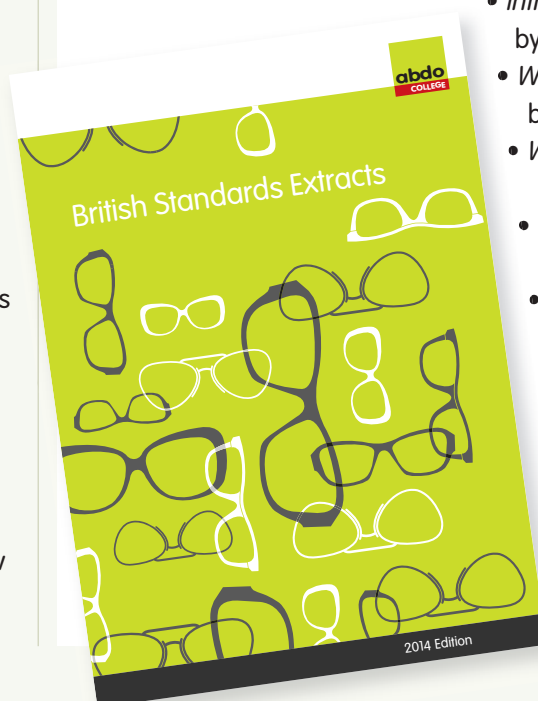
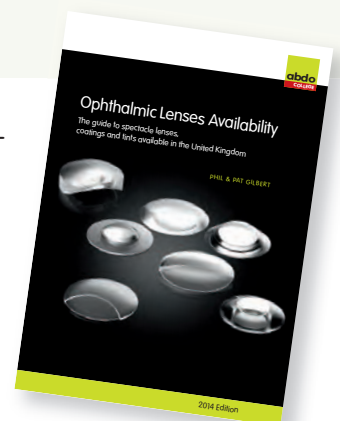
functions and develops. Justin says, "More and more orders are coming in online and while we will always offer a telephone ordering service I can see in the future online orders will continue dominate, which gives me more time for the rest of my role which is involved in maintaining the beautiful ABDO College buildings at Godmersham."

When he isn't running the Bookshop or helping with maintenance, Justin enjoys walking through the Kent

countryside. Summing up, he says, "We hope we offer a friendly and personal service at the ABDO College Bookshop – the price and the speed of service are the two things that people see up front, but beyond that we offer a great range and an easy way to make sure that you have every book that you need, both for your time as a student and as a qualified professional."

ABDO and ABDO College publish a range of titles – which will come from the ABDO College Bookshop even if you order them elsewhere!

- *Abnormal Ocular Conditions* by Pipe and Rapley
- *Ocular Anatomy and Histology* by Pipe and Rapley
- *Optics* by Tunncliffe and Hirst



- *Introduction to Visual Optics* by Tunncliffe
- *Worked Problems in Ophthalmic Lenses* by Tunncliffe and Janney
- *Worked Problems in Visual Optics* by Griffiths
- *Worked Problems in Optics* by Tunncliffe
- *Essentials of Dispensing* by Tunncliffe
- *Practical Dispensing* by Griffiths
- *Practical Ophthalmic Lenses* by Jalie and Wray
- *Ophthalmic Lenses Availability* compiled by Gilbert and Gilbert
- *British Standards Extracts*

Michelle Newton

We find out about Michelle and her research

Michelle Newton has recently completed her BSc Honours at ABDO College in association with Canterbury Christ Church University. Michelle is a married mum, with three children aged 19, 17 and 15, and works in an independent practice in Portsmouth, part of a small group. She says, "I ended up in optics almost by accident. My first job in the field was as a receptionist, and I really just wanted a part time job that fitted with the family, but as I did some courses with the WCSM my interest grew. When the opportunity came up to do the DO course I leapt at it. It has been a full three years, especially as I decided to challenge myself by going for the degree course as well as aiming for my FBDO qualification."



One of the biggest challenges of the course for Michelle was learning how to carry out research and write in an academic style. She has met this challenge head on, however, and her final year research project, addressing the question, *Is the prevalence of dry eye syndrome increasing due to evermore reliance on digital screens and visual display units?* received one of the top marks in her class. Michelle says, "I struggled with the writing and research parts of the degree course for first two years but it all came together in the third year. I really enjoyed the final research project, it felt like it flowed, and I was shocked how well it read when I had pulled all the research together at the end. Everything we were taught about evidence-based practice came in useful. In the first year we had written an essay about learning how to research. I didn't feel like I'd written a great essay at the time but

I went back and looked at my notes, and found that in fact I had learned lots of useful research skills that I could use for my final year project."

Choosing a topic for the final year research project can also be a challenge for students who need to find an area with a reasonable amount of research, yet also with room for further investigation. They also need to formulate a research question that captures their own interest and has relevance to the profession. Michelle explains how she decided on her topic, "Initially I was going to talk about contact lenses and bacterial keratitis, but when I scoped this out I couldn't define the area and find the right kind of articles. I was working in our private dry eye clinic in practice when the idea came to me for the question of whether screen use could exacerbate dry eye. We often have patients who can't understand why they have dry eye when their eyes running,

so I knew that there was a question about education of and communication with the public. I'd done an ocular hygiene course too, which gave me more insights into the condition. What's more, in our area there was no facility locally for NHS dry eye referrals. It is such a prevalent problem and this made me wonder if there was a way that it could be offered locally to save the NHS money. This could be particularly relevant if screen use was likely to increase the incidence of dry eye in the future." Michelle had to focus all these ideas into a single question, and she decided to focus on, *Is the prevalence of dry eye syndrome increasing due to evermore reliance on digital screens and visual display units?*

Over the page you can read Michelle's findings in more detail, but to sum up, she says, "I found that screen use has a direct effect on increasing

Is the prevalence of dry eye syndrome increasing due to ever more reliance on digital screens and visual display units?

By Michelle Newton BSc(Hons)

reporting of dry eye symptoms. Blink rate drops and dry eyes become more prevalent. Clinically more research is needed into dry eye and how it's treated. I'd also like to see more awareness of signs and symptoms amongst the public. The profession needs to avoid jargon and explanations of dry eye need to be simple and clear. The public also needs to know that there are products that can help dry eye." In addition to this, Michelle says, "If we could offer dry eye services locally, we could make patients more aware of ocular hygiene and how to look after surface of eye. People would be more comfortable when using computers."

Michelle has found the BSc (Hons) in Ophthalmic Dispensing a life changing course. She says, "Now I have the degree I'd love to go into partnership with my current practice or maybe own my own practice as an independent. I wouldn't have said that three years ago. The course has changed my mind-set. I'd been in the navy for four years and thought that was my only shot at a career. Since then, I'd only worked part time, and spent the rest of my time bringing up the children. Now they are older, I've done the course. It has changed the way I think about a lot of things, and the future looks really exciting."

In ophthalmic practice, dry eye syndrome is a common complaint. The definition of dry eye by the International Dry Eye workshop as a "multi factorial disease of the tears and ocular surface that results in symptoms of discomfort, visual disturbance, and tear film instability with potential damage to the ocular surface. It is accompanied by increased osmolarity of the tear film and inflammation of the ocular surface".

Research was undertaken to determine whether the prevalence of this condition has increased with the abundant use and dependence upon the digital visual display screen either in the form of a computer, tablet or mobile phone. The utilisation of peer reviewed articles and data were analysed to determine if this analysis to determine if this was the case. Research was conducted and a methodical approach was undertaken to answer the research question. Probability values were examined in order to be able to determine the accuracy of the studies researched.

Dry eye syndrome is medically known as 'Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca'. It is a chronic condition which at present is predominantly diagnosed in the elderly. Dry eye affects the front surface of the cornea, the lid margins and the conjunctiva. Without effective treatment dry eye syndrome, which at present is still in development, can be a debilitating disease. Dry eye can be a debilitating condition for the sufferer and is an increasing health problem which is prevalent in adults and significantly more widespread in the elderly. Other factors regarding the aetiology of dry eye were considered, these include the analysis of data regarding gender, contact lens wear, lifestyle choices such as diet smoking and alcohol consumption, demographic factors and climate.

Computers are an essential part of modern society and day to day life, either in the format of a tablet, mobile phone or visual display unit. They are increasingly being used by young children. This also gives credence to the research question in relation to the fact that if digital display use is more prevalent, then will this give rise to the increasing diagnosis of dry eye? Consideration whilst conducting the research study included blink rate whilst using a digital screen and other associated issues such as lifestyle and other health related factors including Health & Safety recommendations regarding the use of computer screens particularly in the workplace. Technology has changed regarding the use of visual display screens and there is a requirement for the assessment of the risks to be addressed.

AIM

A research review to determine whether increased visual display use, such as computer screens, tablets and smart phones has increased the prevalence of dry eye syndrome.



METHOD

Data collection was compiled over an attainable timescale. Articles collected were limited to a specific time frame of less than ten years old to ensure the most up to date information was evaluated. Search engines such as Google Scholar, Pub Med, Wiley Online and Science Direct were utilised with the Boolean operators 'and' 'or' and 'with'. The terms 'dry eye', 'visual display' and 'effects on vision' were included in the search criteria to eliminate misrepresentative articles. However, due to the increasing amount of data collected on the subject of dry eye syndrome a vast amount of articles were sourced. Articles were researched and examined to identify which were deemed appropriate for use to discuss the research question some of which were

discarded due to their hierarchy on the evidence pyramid. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative data was utilised and examined.

Eighteen peer reviewed articles were attained collated and reviewed. Of the six articles critiqued five were found to agree with the study question. There is a definitive link with the increase of visual display use and dry eye, ($P > 0.001$).

Dry eye syndrome is a disease which can have a direct effect of the quality of life of the sufferer. Within the literature review, it has been highlighted how significant the visual display screen is in relation to dry eye, however it has recognised it is not the only factor that affects the diagnosis of dry eye.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CRITIQUED

Peer reviewed articles were sourced and articles published between 2005 and present day were critiqued and analysed to determine whether there is a definitive link between the advanced reliance and use of digital display equipment and the diagnosis of dry eye syndrome. Academic search engines were utilised to accumulate the data to ensure the highest quality information is used within the essay. Inclusion criteria contained key words 'dry eye syndrome' and 'display screen use'.

Eighteen articles were examined in the literature review, seventeen proved that there visual display screen use has a direct link with dry

eye conditions. Inclusion criteria were articles which predominantly supported the study question. Six articles were critiqued five of which also demonstrated a direct correlation with the increased use of display screens and the prevalence of dry eye syndrome. The articles also acknowledge the predisposition of other factors which are related to the prevalence of dry eye syndrome. The probability values in relation to the relationship between the prevalence of dry eye syndrome are universally reported as significantly high throughout the literature review.

ARTICLES CRITIQUED	SUBJECT	TYPE OF STUDY	RELEVANCE TO RESEARCH QUESTION
Cardona <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Blink rate	Qualitative study	Yes agrees
Kawashima, Uchino and Tsuboto (2010)	Association between Internet use and dry eye	Qualitative and quantitative	Yes agrees
Moon, Lee and Moon (2014)	Development of dry in children	Qualitative study	Yes agrees
Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Prevalence of blue light exerted from VDU	Quantitative study	Unable to verify link requires more research
Portello <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Prevalence of dry eye in office workers	Quantitative study	Yes agrees
Schaumburg <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Higher prevalence of dry eye among women	Quantitative study	Yes agrees

DISCUSSION

The results indicate an overwhelming connection between the use of visual display units and dry eye syndrome. It is important not to disregard other elemental factors such as lifestyle, gender, climate and environment and it is acknowledged that these play a significant role in the aetiology of dry eye syndrome. The results of the research study indicate a requirement to investigate the need to provide services at local level to promote eye health and to develop ways in which dry eye syndrome may be monitored and treated. At present there is no substantial funding in the private sector from the National Health Service to undertake a clinical role in local practice. At present treatment is only available within specialist eye departments or private clinics funded by the patient.

The studies reviewed have indicated that there are a number of consequences of the increased prevalence of dry eye syndrome. Visual problems characterised by the reduction in the quality of the tear film are increasingly affecting the quality of life for some dry eye patients. There is an increase in the frequency of reports of difficulty in sustaining and maintain visual concentration specifically when using a visual display unit.

Dry eye syndrome is recognised as worldwide as a fundamental growing issue and as the review of the data indicates the prevalence of dry eye syndrome is becoming ever increasingly problematic.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the prevalence of dry eye syndrome is very problematic. The research question required up to date information to be evaluated to determine the answer to the research question. Dry eye syndrome is more prevalent due to the increased reliance on visual display screens.

In optical practice it is necessary to ensure that qualified informative staff are able identify the symptoms of dry eye due to the increasing prevalence of the condition. Ocular hygiene must be addressed as this can significantly reduce the symptoms of dry eye. As a result of this research study it can be identified that dry eye syndrome and the use and dependence on visual display screens have an identifiable relationship. At present the implications in practice are minimal, however a structured approach needs to be adapted to ensure that patients diagnosed with dry eye syndrome have access to an objective treatment plan, which could be adapted in local services instead of the increasing reliance on National Health Services. It is inevitable that due to the decreasing structure of the NHS that reliance will more focussed on local management on conditions such as dry eye syndrome, it is however imperative to ensure treatment is still widely available across the board and not revised into a two tier health system.

The provision of information regarding the implications of dry eye syndrome and increased visual display use requires an implementation of the availability of a plan for the future. The public are increasingly

health aware and the availability of information from the internet provides an increasing desire for knowledge. Education regarding the increased reliance on visual displays needs to be updated and addressed and implemented at school age, especially with the increased reliance on visual display screens in school age education.

In the ever changing technological environment it is essential frontline staff within practice are knowledgeable and approachable. The role of the dispensing optician is critical in practice and within the wider community. The potential impact of the ability to deliver a service that can inform and educate the local population in the symptoms and progression of dry eye syndrome can only seek to improve the development of customer service and relations in the local community. Future developments of information should include advice to parents regarding the use of visual display screens for children, and indeed adults.

Public perception of the role undertaken by high street opticians is also changing as there is an increase in the development of services offered. It will be imperative for local level services to be of the highest quality in service and value for money. Restraints upon NHS budgets demand this and the development of local services may reduce the ever increasing demands upon the NHS and local authorities and increase patient satisfaction.

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Foundation Degree awards event

On a beautiful late-summer evening in September, ABDO College held its fifth Foundation Degree awards event for students attending Godmersham on their final 3rd year block release session. Hosted by College Principal, Jo Underwood, the successful students were awarded their Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) foundation degree certificates by Professor Kate Springett (Head of the School of Applied Health Professions at CCCU) and Peter Black (ABDO President).

Following the awards presentation the event concluded with celebration party.





An interview with Sue Rose

‘Studying alongside work isn’t easy – you have to be very well organised’

If you have studied at ABDO College in Godmersham, have you ever wondered who sets up the classrooms and labs? Sue Rose is not just the ABDO College technician but carries out a number of roles that help keep the College running smoothly, which she combines with ongoing study and a love of cycling and motorcycling. Read on to find out more about Sue in the latest of this series of interviews taking you behind the scenes.

Sue Rose might be found early in the morning before the students arrive, setting out frame rules and lenses. Alternatively she may be liaising with the reception team, briefing them about plans for catering for the day ahead. And occasionally if not at ABDO College, Sue might be in practice as a trainee CLO in preparation for her practical examinations.

Sue came from a background in graphic design, but when she saw an advert for an optical technician in a practice window, decided to make the leap into optics. She says, “I like science so that side of the technician’s job appealed to me.” Sue worked for a number of years both in the independent sector and for multiples. She says, “I could see that the work of a technician was becoming more computerised which didn’t appeal as much so I applied for the DO course when ABDO College first opened. Not long after I took up the position as technician at the College and I’ve been working there for almost ten years now.”

Sue Rose now wears several hats at ABDO College. She explains, “I was first

employed as college technician, but I now also teach and line manage reception and switchboard staff for ABDO and ABDO College.” She continues, “As college technician, I’m a jack of all trades. I make sure that the classrooms are equipped for the needs of the teaching staff and students. That could be anything from the IT equipment, laptops and projectors, down to supplying equipment for dissection where there are a lot of regulations to comply with. I need to take into account safety in the classroom. In the second year students are given the option to dissect a porcine eye and it is very valuable. It gives the student a different perception of the eye, an appreciation of the structures. A small number of students are squeamish to start off with but become more clinical and interested in what they are seeing. The retina is fascinating – when you think of all the layers and cells, then you see it on the end of your scalpel it is amazing.”

As well as her role as technician, Sue also teaches practical ophthalmic lenses. She says, “A lot of this course is engineered to help students both pass

their exams and become good practical DOs. I teach focimetry, hand neutralisation, using a lens measure, and how that fits into the theory. I get the students to relate the effects of with and against movement or scissors movements to the kind of difficulties that patient’s experience with new lenses, for example such as when a patient complains that everything looks like it slopes. They experience this sort of thing in practice all the time. We also teach repairs. In their third year they have to complete two repairs as part of the practical exam, reforming a metal rimmed frame, rimless repairs and so on. We can relate that to the adjustments and repairs that they are doing already when they are at work. We teach a lot about tools – they often pick up on new tools that they don’t have in practice and want to know where to obtain the things that can make a repair easily done in a matter of minutes. I like to get the students talking to and learning from one another. Some are brand new to optics, others have ten years of experience and some are from multiples, others from independents. I can learn from them as well as they learn from each other.”

Beyond her work responsibilities, Sue is always keen to keep her qualifications up to date. She says, “When you are involved in education you have to keep abreast of the latest developments, so when the BSc Honours in Ophthalmic Dispensing was created I took the course. This has the added benefit of giving me a real understanding of what staff and students need when I am acting as College technician and setting

up labs.” Sue is now studying for her contact lens certificate. She says, “I have completed the theory part of the course. I’m currently working under supervision in practice putting together my case records a day a week or a day a fortnight, fitting it in round my job. It is a little daunting going back into practice, particularly making clinical decisions. I have my practical contact lens exams coming up.” Studying alongside work isn’t easy. Sue says, “You have to be very well organised, have good time management skills in order to get everything done, and it does mean making sacrifices with your social life.”

Alongside her technical and teaching responsibilities, Sue has been managing the reception team for four to five years. She says, “We’ve seen some change in staff. The receptionists’ role is varied. We have a small number of employees and the College is based in the middle of the countryside so they have to deal with a range of tasks and challenges. As well as greeting visitors, the reception team organises lunches or tea and organises the post. Beyond the day to day jobs, I also have to look at issues such as, giving the College and the Association best value for money for their postal accounts. Because of the remote location we keep a stock of all manner of stationery in reception too. The reception team has a vital role for all the students, particularly on their first visits to the College when they have lots of questions. They are on hand to settle in new arrivals, offering a map and

a tour. They book in and out library books. We’re the first port of call for first aid and will assist in contacting a local surgery or dentist. The team can even advise on where to go at the weekend.”

Although it may seem hard to fit it all in, Sue has an active life outside the College, with a range of hobbies. She says, “I like cycling and motorcycling and have several bikes”. When she isn’t riding bikes, Sue enjoys spending time with her black Labrador, Daisy who has been known to visit the College too. Sue says, “Everyone at Godmersham knows her.” As well as all this, Sue enjoys photography and art. Perhaps unsurprisingly for someone who has such a multi-faceted role, Sue says, “The world is full of interesting people and places – I don’t understand people who are bored, they are missing something.”



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For further information on ABDO College sponsorship opportunities contact Michael R Potter FBDO on 01227 733 913 or email at mpotter@abdo.org.uk.

2014 Winter Revision courses

ABDO College is now taking applications for its popular dispensing and contact lens revision courses, to be held at the College in Godmersham.

The following courses are available:

Thursday 6 November

9am to 4pm	Contact Lenses: Practical
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Monday 10 November

1pm to 4pm	Contact Lenses: CL Anatomy Theory
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Tuesday 11 November

9am to 4pm	Year 1: PQE Practical
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9am to 12noon	Contact Lenses: CL Visual Optics Theory
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1pm to 4pm	Contact Lenses: CL Practice Theory
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Wednesday 12 November

9am to 12noon	Year 3: Refractive Management Theory
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1pm to 4pm	Year 3: Low Vision Theory
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Thursday 13 November

9am to 12noon	Year 2: Professional Conduct Theory
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1pm to 4pm	Year 2: Advanced OL & Dispensing Theory
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10am to 1pm	Year 3: FQE Practical Section A
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1pm to 4pm	Year 3: FQE Practical Section D/E/F
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Friday 14 November

9am to 12noon	Year 3: FQE Practical Section B
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1pm to 4pm	Year 3: FQE Practical Section C
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For further information and application forms

for these and other courses, or to request a copy of the ABDO College Prospectus, please contact the Courses Team on **01227 738 829 (Option 1)** or email info@abdocollege.org.uk

**ABDO College Operational Services, Godmersham Park,
Godmersham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7DT**

www.abdocollege.org.uk



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