

CANCUN MEETING REPORT

Dr. Eiden Encourages More Glaucoma Care

Clinical and practice management aspects reported

Don't be dissuaded about adding medical patients, in particular glaucoma patients, to your mix, fearing that they'll take too much time in your schedule. According to **S. Barry Eiden, O.D., F.A.A.O.**, of North Suburban Vision Consultants, Deerfield, IL, who presented four hours of continuing education on the topic at the ALLDocs annual meeting in Cancun in November, a glaucoma patient requires between 60 and 80 minutes per year, over the course of several visits, and

can be scheduled to fill in around the core schedule of primary care patients. The glaucoma patient doesn't require as much time in the schedule and doesn't require as much of the practitioner's hands-on time. But each glaucoma patient represents an additional \$450-\$550 in annual revenue, said Dr. Eiden.

Dr. Eiden presented several tips for managing his time with glaucoma patients:

- ◆ Keep a sheet on the inside front cover of the patient's file, listing the

most recent date seen and the IOP levels and other pertinent information. "Rather than have to rifle through a thick patient chart, the data is there at your fingertips," he said.

- ◆ Create a list of web sites on eye

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Dr. Eiden presenting in Cancun

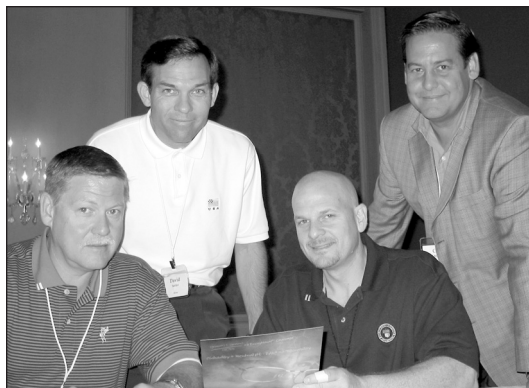
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O.D.s' Prescribing Habits Examined

Of the more than half a million ophthalmic drug prescriptions written last year, O.D.s wrote only about 1 in 23. Pediatricians wrote about twice as many ophthalmic drug prescriptions, and primary care physicians wrote about seven times as many. Alcon's director of professional relations, **David Sattler**, told ALLDocs members at the annual meeting.

In writing anti-allergy scripts, O.D.s fared better, writing about one in seven of the total. Indeed, optometrists wrote 11 percent more anti-allergy prescriptions this year

compared to last year, a far bigger increase than the 3.1 percent hike in prescriptions written by ophthalmologists. PATANOL® topped the list, capturing 68.7 percent of prescriptions written by O.D.s.



Meeting of the Minds: Alcon executives David Sattler (standing left), Chuck Marshall (standing right) and Marv Morrison (seated left) confer with Dr. Gelb during Cancun meeting.

1.5 million were written by O.D.s. TRAVATAN® was the drug of choice in 9.3

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Get Patients Started on Good Habits Now

It's not just teens who represent today's new contact lens wearers. While 27 percent of new lens wearers are 17 or under, and another 17 percent are in the 18- to 24-year-old group, many more are older adults. No matter the age, making a recommendation is the most effective way to get new contact lens patients off on the right start in contact lens care. As Alcon's Director of National Accounts Chuck Marshall explained during his presentation at the Cancun meeting, simply handing out a product nets a compliance rate of about 60 percent. Couple the sample with a specific verbal or written recommendation, however, and the compliance rate spikes up to 90 percent or more. ■

Glaucoma Care

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conditions. Dr. Eiden has created these in tear-off sheet format. He'll circle the relevant sites so patients know where to learn more about their specific conditions.

◆ Invest in the technology. With a show of hands, more than half the group of gathered O.D.s said they use disc tomography (HRT-II) or nerve fiber layer analysis (GDX). "It can pay for it-

self within six months," Dr. Eiden said. Practitioners using high-tech equipment such as nerve fiber layer analysis or scanning laser disc tomography can bill for the testing using CPT code 92315.

The practice management opportunity is undeniable. Treatable glaucoma exists in 21 percent of the population over 52 and 4.7 percent of the population over 75, reported Dr. Eiden.

In treating glaucoma patients, prostaglandin analogs, such as Alcon's TRAVATAN, are the first line of defense,

followed by beta blockers. A combination of the two is the second line of defense, and laser treatment is third. Dr. Eiden said he prefers TRAVATAN to the other drugs for tangible as well as intangible reasons. For example, the medication is more effective with African American patients and requires no refrigeration. An intangible reason for selecting it is because of the manufacturer. "Alcon has been an optometry-friendly company. If all else is equal, I make the choice to support the company that best supports my practice and profession," he said. ■

Letter from the President



Dr. Gelb

The ALLDocs annual meeting in Cancun was a success in every way. More than 50 O.D.s, representing close to 200 offices, enjoyed up to five glorious sun-filled and information-packed days of camaraderie, practice management strategies, CE and listening to presentations from vendors. We traveled to Xcaret National Ecological Park, played golf, went shopping and enjoyed the spectacular scenery.

CE presentations were from some of the most respected names in the profession:

- ◆ S. Barry Eiden, O.D., of North Suburban Vision Consultants, Deerfield, IL. Alcon sponsored his session on glaucoma management.
- ◆ James Thimons, O.D., Fairfield, CT. His presentation, sponsored by AMO, covered many medications, including Restasis™.
- ◆ Walter West, O.D., Brentwood, TN, chief optometric editor of *Optometric Management*. His session, sponsored by Optos, focused on the scanning laser.
- ◆ Lyndon Jones, Ph.D., University of Waterloo. CIBA Vision sponsored his session on silicone hydrogel lenses.
- ◆ Kenneth Daniels, O.D., Hopewell, NJ. His presentation on dry eye was sponsored by Hydrogel Vision.

I'd also like to thank the three LensCrafters representatives who joined us: Bill DiGrezio, Wally Lovejoy and Dr. Mark Jacquot. I'd also like to thank Drs. Bob Mulgrew and Jim Lett for all their assistance in running the meeting.

Dr. Bob Gander gets a special round of applause. He organized and set up the meeting, made the arrangements for the Xcaret trip and secured the vendor support. In other words, he did all the difficult tasks and then had to leave early to cover his own practice.

This meeting would not be possible were it not for the continuing interest from our membership—who often tell me this meeting is among the most valuable they've ever attended—and our sponsors. As noted by Dr. Eiden in his presentation on glaucoma, when all other things are equal, the choice is ours: to support those companies that support our practices and our profession. I couldn't agree more. Here's a list of those companies that supported the Cancun meeting:

Alcon, AMO, Art Optical, Bausch & Lomb, CIBA Vision, Cooper-Vision, Heidelberg, Hydrogel Vision, Ocular Sciences, Optos, Paragon Vision, Sauflon, Vistakon and X-Cel. ■



Prescribing Habits

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percent of those prescriptions written, Sattler said.

Anti-infective prescriptions were also down last year, with 1.6 percent fewer being written. O.D.s wrote 2.8 percent fewer anti-infective prescriptions last year than the year before, accounting for just one in 23 scripts written. Newcomer VIGAMOX™ is quickly climbing up the list of preferred medications. In July, it accounted for 7.6 percent of all anti-infective drug Rxes written by O.D.s; by September that percentage jumped to 11.9. Alcon's CILOXAN® tops the list at 21.6 percent of all prescriptions written by O.D.s in this category.

With O.D.s writing 13.7 percent of the anti-allergy drugs, 4.3 percent of the anti-infective drugs, and seven percent of the glaucoma drugs, there is tremendous opportunity for growth, said Sattler. ■

Vote on Next Year's Meeting Site

ALLDocs members have their chance now to vote for a meeting location. Please fax your response to Dr. Kerry Gelb's office at 732.726.1735.

Select: Cancun Las Vegas
 New Orleans

Or a place we've never been. (Please specify in the U.S. or outside of the U.S.) _____

Glaucoma Management Made Easier

If you ask practitioners who manage glaucoma what is an ideal medication to lower IOP, they'll say the following:

- ◆ A drug that lowers intraocular pressure by at least 33 percent.
- ◆ Once-a-day dosing.
- ◆ Long duration of action.

The ideal drug is TRAVATAN, Alcon's prostaglandin analog. TRAVATAN lowers IOP effectively, a full FP Agonists with a long duration of action, and a convenient once-a-day dosing for patients.

Furthermore, when TRAVATAN is compared to XALATAN*, TRAVATAN is more effective at lowering IOP 24 hours after the last dose (2.9mm Hg lower than XALATAN), said **Rubin Spann**, Alcon's associate product manager for glaucoma products.

He added: "TRAVATAN has been shown to maintain IOP

6.6mm Hg below baseline 3.5 days after the last dose, which is quite impressive. Even after the last drop, it's still working. That's important because more than 50

percent of glaucoma patients don't take their medications regularly,

meaning that their IOPs can fluctuate. Diurnal fluctuation is a risk factor for glaucoma. TRAVATAN maintains the diurnal curve over a 24-hour period."

Bottom line: "Even if patients miss a day, the medication is still working to maintain the patients' IOP fluctuation. We don't suggest that TRAVATAN is dosed every other day. However, the doctor has peace of mind if patients miss a day—they still have TRAVATAN working to maintain their IOP," said Spann.

In addition, the responder rate to TRAVATAN is higher than with other prostaglandins. Therefore, patients may be more compliant, and compliance may lead to better control of IOP. ■

*XALATAN® is a registered trademark of Pfizer.



Build a Glaucoma Practice

Many practitioners find there is tremendous value in cultivating a glaucoma practice. First and foremost, you're doing patients a service, said **Rubin Spann**. They don't have to move between practitioners to serve their eye care needs.

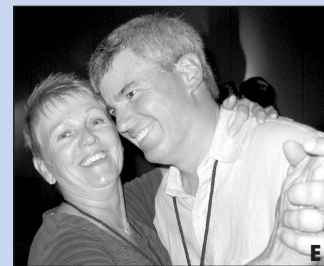
There are economic benefits as well. Glaucoma patients want a long-term relationship with their provider. "They typically come in twice a year, and because family members have a higher glaucoma risk, you may also get their family into the practice."

Let patients know whether they're at risk for glaucoma. Those at higher risk:

- Patients age 40 or above.
- Anyone with a family history of glaucoma.
- African Americans.
- Anyone with a IOP of 18 or above. ■

Cancun Meeting Photos

At Work and at Play (l. to r. in each photo):
A: Drs. Stein and Goldschneider. **B:** Drs. Facchiano and Martin. **C:** Drs. Wendorff and Eiden. **D:** Dr. Mazie, B&L's Lipari, and Drs. Gelb and Hults. **E:** Dr. Mulgrew and wife Vicki. **F:** Dr. S. Brown, Patricia Pirone and Michael Pirone. **G:** Dr. Spruill and wife Mae. **H:** Dr. Ciccarello and wife Victoria.



Reach beyond Refractions

Are you leaving money on the table by not understanding what your services are worth? Are you unsure of how to properly integrate primary care coding and billing procedures into your practice?

John Rumpakis, O.D., M.B.A., Lake Oswego, OR, suspects you are. In this space, Dr. Rumpakis will author a column in each issue about how the "medical model" can better serve optometrists and, as a result, patients. Dr. Rumpakis, of Practice Resource Management, Inc., will

demonstrate the value that O.D.s are missing by not practicing to the full extent that

our increased scope of practice allows. Practicing medical eye care will have a significant impact on your net income as well as the value of how your patients perceive you and your practice.

What's Your Part of \$222 Million?

Last year, the Medicare Part B payments to physicians for 4.7 million glaucoma diagnosing and testing totalled \$222 million. That's an average of just over \$47 per procedure or test. In addition, surgical reimbursements totaled nearly \$89 million for approximately 250,000 procedures. ■

He has also developed a web-enabled software program, called Reimbursement Plus™. It allows you to compare the maximum allowable reimbursement from any insurance company for any procedure to Medicare's maximum allowable to your own existing fees. This way, you know the true value of the services you provide and can make better business decisions

when setting your fee schedule. In other words, "If Blue Cross Blue Shield reimburses at \$62 and Medicare at \$59 for a specific procedure, and your existing fee schedule is \$35 for the same procedure, you're leaving at least \$30 for each procedure you perform on the table, and that can add up quickly."

Among the points Dr. Rumpakis will make is that "You don't know what you're doing with a patient until you are done with that exam. Only then will you know whether what you provided is a refractive service or a medical service, or a combination of both, and how it should be billed."

Dr. Rumpakis's goal is to help O.D.s "achieve a change in habit, so O.D.s think of themselves as physicians and understand the true value of the services they perform." ■



Dr. Rumpakis

GUEST COLUMN

And Thank You for Flying...

by **Bob Scott**, Director of National Accounts, Ocular Sciences

How many times have you been on an airline flight and you've just landed and the flight attendant welcomes you to your destination and says how she knows you have a choice of carriers and then says "Thank you for flying with us?" In many respects, the contact lens business is about as competitive as the airlines, so we'd like to take this opportunity to say, "We'll soon be arriving in 2004, and thanks for prescribing Ocular Sciences."

The recent ALLDoc's meeting in Cancun gave us the opportunity to tell you and your colleagues that OSI is a very healthy vendor-partner to LensCrafters and that many new and exciting product enhancements, expansions and product developments are in the hopper for '04 and beyond. We hope you agree that there has never been a more excit-

ing time in the contact lens industry with more prescribing and lens wearing options than ever before. OSI is very well positioned for the future, and we are anxious to build on the solid partnership we've established with LensCrafters and the leaseholding doctors.

Although contact lens companies don't have frequent flyer programs, we are all after you to become "frequent fitters." As you develop your practice goals for 2004, consider the quality of products, then the sales and customer service support. Also, consider the pricing, promotional and value-added programs available

to support you. We feel very confident that once you've reviewed all these factors, you'll conclude that OSI makes good sense.

Happy Holidays and thanks once again for "flying" OSI. Sit back and enjoy the flight. ■



Breaking Bread in Cancun: (l. to r.) Dr. Joe Martin, Dr. Frank Verdone, Bob Scott, Dr. Rob Rudman and Dr. Rick Franz