

It is coincidental, but nonetheless fitting, that a person as affable as **Simonetta Morselli, MD**, is an expert in a procedure with the acronym SMILE. In this article, the Italian corneal refractive surgeon talks about the effort that she puts into honing her podium presentations, among other things.



OPENING DOORS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES



My expertise in performing small-incision lenticule extraction (SMILE) has provided opportunities for me to speak about this cutting-edge procedure and present my findings at many meetings over the past few years. These opportunities are important to me, in that they elevate my professional reputation throughout the ophthalmic community around the world. Becoming known for my expertise as a SMILE surgeon has led to lots of referrals from colleagues, and this is beneficial to me and to my hospital.

Being thought of as an opinion leader offers many benefits. For instance, speaking at ophthalmology meetings is an excellent way for me to stay on top of what is new; it offers me a chance to see fresh approaches to surgery and innovative uses of diagnostic devices. Further, being at these meetings opens the doors to professional opportunities and to meeting new people on both the clinical and industry sides of ophthalmology.

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WHEN I AM AT THE PODIUM, I feel an intense responsibility, and I invest all of my energy into being exquisitely precise. I



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Dr. Morselli at the 2016 WOC meeting (above); with colleagues (fourth from left) in Lisbon at the 2017 ESCRS meeting (below).



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try to prepare by searching the internet and familiarizing myself with the latest research so that I will be as informed as possible when I make my presentation. I usually start preparing 3 weeks in advance of an event, and I usually spend 2 to 3 hours on the Sunday night before the presentation reviewing my slides and videos and making necessary adjustments.

My preferred way of sharing information about SMILE is by making podium presentations; writing articles is not one of my strengths because I am much more mathematical and practical than verbal. Being able to help educate my peers in this way has enabled me to significantly expand my portfolio of SMILE patients, has given me the privilege of supervising during SMILE procedures performed by my peers, and has improved my recognition among patients who now view me as an expert on this procedure.

I AM GRATEFUL to the ophthalmic industry for providing me the opportunity to accrue all the benefits of being an opinion leader; however, I do not want to be considered a tool of industry. I do this work only for the benefit of myself and my patients. The slides I present are not prepared by the company that sells the product about which I am speaking. If I ever have concerns about the safety or efficacy of any product I am asked to represent, I immediately tell the company exactly what I think. These are my words to live by as a thought and opinion leader. ■

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Dr. Morselli performing SMILE in live surgery (top and center row); conducting an on-screen interview with a colleague (bottom).