

ELEVATING PRACTICE THROUGH STRATEGIC DRY EYE MANAGEMENT



A dual tool for clinical excellence and revenue generation.

BY AMANDA CARDWELL CARONES, MPH

When it comes to vision correction—where precision meets well-being—the management of dry eye disease (DED) is not just a clinical necessity but also a strategic advantage. This area of practice can enhance surgical outcomes, improve patients' quality of life, and open lucrative avenues for practice growth.

That is good news for everyone, considering that, in a recent study, DED had the largest population-wide impact on vision-related quality of life of all common eye diseases. This was true not only with older populations but also with young adults because of their increased use of digital devices.¹

This article discusses how you can optimize the business of DED management by leveraging it as a dual tool for clinical excellence and revenue generation.

CONSISTENT SCREENING

There is an art to optimizing DED management. The challenge in diagnosing the condition lies in the subjective nature of its symptoms and their variability among patients. Implementing routine, comprehensive questionnaires and advanced ocular surface diagnostics across all patient consultations helps identify both asymptomatic patients and those with known ocular surface issues before any surgical intervention.

Remember the saying *garbage in, garbage out*? Ensure your staff knows that difficult-to-capture images during

surgical workups may indicate a problem that should be brought to your attention. Far too often, I have seen technicians administer artificial tears when they have difficulty taking measurements. This creates an artificial ocular surface. Although the images may look good, the data they provide may be less than accurate.

Identifying and addressing ocular surface conditions early sets the stage for improved postoperative results and patient satisfaction.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION AND TREATMENT PERSONALIZATION

Whether DED is uncovered as part of a routine screening for surgery or the patient is actively searching for relief from their discomfort, engaging them as an active participant in their care is fundamental. Educating patients about DED—including its causes and symptoms—empowers them. When patients understand their condition and the impact it may have on surgical results or quality of life, they are more likely to be proactive in managing DED and to follow through with treatment plans. A well-informed patient is more likely to adhere to treatment plans with patience and persistence and to experience less frustration throughout their treatment journey.

For symptomatic patients, understanding the subjective impact of DED and addressing the root cause can improve their quality of life. DED is multifactorial, requiring a tailored therapeutic approach. Once

a solid diagnosis has been established, personalized treatment plans can be developed to address the patient's specific type of DED. Therapy may involve tear supplementation, inflammation control, or the management of meibomian gland dysfunction. Personalization underscores your practice's commitment to delivering bespoke care.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REVENUE GENERATION

Strategic DED management offers more than clinical benefits. It can become a comprehensive service offering that enhances your practice's competitive edge and opens a new, sustainable revenue stream. In an era when differentiation is paramount, this dual benefit reinforces your practice's reputation for clinical excellence while bolstering its financial health.

The narrative of DED management in the context of cataract and refractive surgery is evolving. The area is ripe for innovation. By embracing advanced diagnostic techniques, prioritizing patient education, personalizing treatment, and recognizing the specialty's economic potential, practices can not only enhance patient outcomes and satisfaction but also secure an advantage over competitors. ■

1. Morthen MK, Magno MS, Utheim TP, et al. The vision-related burden of dry eye. *Ocul Surf.* 2022;23:207-215.

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