

Subject: therapeutic endorsement comment
Date: Sunday, 30 January 2011 2:20:12 PM

Comments on Therapeutics qualifications and registration.

Public benefits – As an optometrist practicing in a regional metropolitan area with easy access to eye specialists and general medical care I see very little benefit from requiring all optometrists to be eligible for therapeutic endorsement. Should one of my patients have an issue requiring medical treatment I have excellent relationships with local doctors that mean they can obtain prompt and expert care.

For optometrists now entering the profession I believe the expectation is reasonable as it is now part of their degree and they have chosen this path. I have now been practicing optometry for 32 years. On entering the profession my desire was not to treat eye disease but to act as a primary eye care specialist, detecting abnormality and referring as appropriate. I have throughout my career maintained my level of continuing education and so currently am involved in many of the therapeutics lectures and so feel happy to make suggestions as to treatments to GPs where appropriate, and also feel confident in my referral to specialists. I still have no desire to prescribe drugs.

If it was generally agreed that therapeutic qualifications be a requirement for practice as an optometrist in Australia, there should most definitely be a period of grace.

I would suggest a prolonged period of grace. Twenty years would seem adequate. In NSW the process of endorsement is so prolonged that it would probably take that long to get existing optometrists through. It would also mean that some of us would be ready to retire gracefully. This is certainly what occurred with the registration for diagnostic drugs in NSW, which I would assume is a precedent.

Over-seas trained optometrists should be required to complete appropriate competency assessments if registering for the first time after 2014.

I would have assumed that if a period of grace was allowed that this would also apply to those optometrists but if the requirement became general then it would apply to all.

[Impediments to the proposal](#). In NSW the process of endorsement is prolonged and difficult. There is no possible way that all NSW optometrists could obtain therapeutic endorsement by 2014.

ank you

byn Porter Optometrist