

Subject: Compulsory OT for Registration
Date: Monday, 31 January 2011 5:06:28 PM

Dear AHPRA,

I wish to object to the proposal that therapeutic qualification become a requirement for general optometric registration by 2014. I am an independent Optometrist and working mother with 4 young children and am looking to retire in the next 10-12 years. I would find it difficult to leave my practice and family for any length of time for the intensive studies required in order to obtain my endorsement.

I have had the benefit of a new graduate working at my practice for the past year and have found that she has not used her therapeutics to write more than five scripts during this time. More often than not our patients are referred directly to Ophthalmologists of which we have 5 in our town.

I understand that the public would benefit from therapeutically endorsed Optometrists who practice in rural and remote settings with no or limited access to Ophthalmologists, but not all Optometrists require this endorsement especially when there is reasonable Ophthalmic services available in their immediate area. In the past, as experienced Optometrists, we have had good relationships with GP's that we have been able to co-manage certain conditions. In fact, most patients feel reassured by this arrangement in that both their GP and the Optometrist are informed of any changes to the patient's condition and/or health as they are in regular consultation with each other.

I have had some discussions amongst my colleagues and they concur that it should not be mandatory for all existing Optometrists to obtain this qualification, particularly those with long established practices, good working relationships with their local GP's and Ophthalmologists, and limited family time that precludes them from any long term studies. Also, those Optometrists working in non-clinical roles would not benefit from being made to obtain their endorsement.

I understand that The Board is wanting to make the qualifications consistent across the board, but this is not something that can be achieved in a set time frame. Personally, I feel that all Optometrists applying for first time registration, including overseas-trained Optometrists, should have to have this qualification so that over time, as the older trained Optometrists retire or leave the profession, the number of non-endorsed Optometrists will eventually be eliminated.

I would be happy to discuss these comments further if required.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Chin
Optometrist