

Help expand optometry's role in primary care with OT Live

OT Live will bring together a number of well-known speakers to spread the word that expanding primary optometry is the way forward for optical practitioners. The event, to be held at Chesford Grange (pictured below), will take place next month, and *OT* talks to Professor Nizar Hirji, the event's programme director

OT: What is OT Live?

NH: OT Live is a day of presentations by well-respected professionals for practitioners on the 'front-line'. The overall theme is 'Expanding Primary Care Optometry Effectively' – with recent and on-going regulatory changes, it is now possible to practice optometry within a primary care setting, with different emphases and scope, compared to the limitations of the past. The day is about learning from practitioners who are successfully doing just that. Also attendees will learn what they are doing, how they have gone about making it happen, and the impact expanded scope of primary care optometric practice has had on the care of their patients, local ophthalmic services and

their practice. At the event the speakers will focus on this by using a "Grand Rounds" approach – that is to say they will present actual cases of patients and lesions that they have diagnosed and managed in their primary care setting and where appropriate how secondary care practitioners were involved. This approach will make the focus of OT Live very much what the 'front-line' practitioners would like to know about and can relate to. The overall aim is to

give attendees compelling reasons and ideas to expand their scope of primary care optometric practice effectively.



OT: What exactly is going to be on the agenda at OT Live?

NH: The morning begins with Dr Simon Barnard, who is, among other things, in private practice and is director of ocular medicine at the Institute of Optometry, London, a visiting lecturer at City University and convener of the ocular disease examination of the European Diploma of Optometry. He will present 'Harnessing modern imaging technology in Primary Care optometric practice to improve patient care and practice performance'. Recent advances in technology have offered optometrists the opportunity to enhance the clinical care they can provide for patients, and in doing so increase their practice profitability. This presentation will review specific technology and how it can be

successfully integrated into optometric practice. Delegates will be informed about how an NHS 'sight test' may be different from an 'eye examination' and how to incorporate into practice a routine extended eye examination that will not only enhance patient clinical care but will also improve practice profitability. Dr Barnard will explain how he has successfully introduced routine fundus imaging, both conventional image capture and laser scanning photography, retinal nerve fibre thickness analysis and optical coherence tomography into his practice, and will give examples of a number of clinical case studies where these technologies were used to enhance the standard of clinical care provided to patients.

This is followed by a presentation by John Tickner, who works in independent practice on the south coast. A fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, he has the College of Optometrists higher diplomas in Therapeutics, Ocular Conditions and Glaucoma, and is

registered on the GOC Additional Supply and Supplementary Prescriber's registers. His presentation 'Glaucoma management in primary care optometric practice improving patient care and practice success' will guide practitioners through the development of a specialist glaucoma practice. Mr Tickner will show delegates how increasingly complicated cases can be managed in primary care, along with suggestions of how to amend charging structures to accommodate this new mode of practice. Delegates will be informed about referral pathways, how to make a diagnosis and establish treatment options, how to develop an appropriate management plan, how to evaluate glaucoma risk factors and refer appropriately when working in partnership with other primary and secondary care colleagues.

The morning's final presentation is by Dr Cindy Tromans, currently a consultant optometrist and head of optometry at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. She is also an honorary clinical lecturer in the university's Department of Ophthalmology and visiting senior lecturer to the Department of Optometry and Neuroscience University of Manchester. She specialises in paediatric optometry, therapeutic/medical contact lenses, keratoconus and ophthalmic ultrasound. Her presentation, 'An update on the expanding role of optometrists in secondary care' will review the cutting edge roles performed by optometrists in secondary care, including glaucoma co-management, diabetic co-management, anterior segment disease, laser treatment, wet ARMD (with a series of case studies). The lecture will also review the impact of proposed changes to the legislation on independent prescribing and optometrists in secondary care settings.

After lunch the afternoon will begin with a presentation by Dr Deacon Harle, an independent optometrist who also holds a primary care post as an optometrist with a special interest in ophthalmology (OPwSI). He is director of professional services at the Institute of Optometry and is an examiner, education advisor, and therapeutics group member for the College of Optometrists. His presentation 'Additional interventions in primary care optometric practice



Speakers at OT Live include (left to right): John Tickner, Dr Christopher Hemmerdinger and Jane Bell

for better patient care and practice expansion' will explain how modern optometric interventions now go beyond a standard eye examination. Providing such care can be of enormous benefit to both the patient and the practice. Using a grand rounds approach, Dr Harle will take the audience on a tour of optometric interventions that adds 'care value' to primary optometry practice.

This will be followed by a presentation called 'Interfacing effectively with the NHS to expand your primary care optometric practice – everything you need to know but were afraid to ask' by Jane Bell, a self-employed optometrist with a specialist qualification in therapeutics, who has been running the optometry clinic in Hadleigh Lodge Medical Centre. This centre now includes referral refinement and management of anterior segment eye diseases. In her presentation Ms Bell will explain commissioning of primary care-based ophthalmic services beyond the existing scope of the GOS regulations in England and will present audit findings and a service review of an optometry clinic set within a medical practice in Dorset, including ophthalmic conditions encountered and outcomes with examples.

The final presentation of OT Live will be 'When the going gets rough in primary care optometric practice – referring effectively' by Dr Christopher Hemmerdinger, an optometrist who is currently specialist registrar in ophthalmology based at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. He worked in accident and emergency medicine and neurosurgery before specialising in ophthalmology. With increasing involvement of

optometrists in managing ophthalmic conditions, recognising patients who require ophthalmological input is important. Referring effectively ensures conditions requiring urgent attention are seen immediately, with less urgent cases being directed to the appropriate clinic. Dr Hemmerdinger will present a review of cases requiring immediate and urgent referral, and their management.

OT: What about accreditation and CET points?

NH: All presentations at OT Live are accredited for optometrists for standard CET points whilst the presentations by Dr Simon Barnard, Jane Bell and Dr Chris Hemmerdinger are approved for practitioners on the Additional Supply GOC Register. John Tickner's presentation is approved for practitioners on the Supplementary Prescriber's Register. The whole day offers a total of 6.5 CET points.

OT: How can practitioners book to attend?

NH: Delegates can book and pay online at www.aop.org.uk – interested parties can click on OT Live under the events section of the website's home page.

Contact Tracy Symons at the AOP for further information. (tracysymons@aop.org.uk or 020 7787 1119)

● **OT Live will take place on October 26.**