

Advancements in eye healthcare

Embracing digitalisation and technological progress

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IN THE evolving healthcare landscape, digitalisation and technological advancements are reshaping patient care, enhancing accuracy, and improving accessibility. The eye healthcare sector is no exception to this transformation.

Eyecon Optometry Network CEO and Senior Optometrist Datuk Dr Murphy Chan, said integrating advanced technology has significantly improved eye examinations, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes.

“Compared to the conventional traditional method, digitalised eye examinations utilising advanced diagnostic equipment have revolutionised the precision and efficiency of eye care practitioners (ECPs).

“This not only aids in accurate prescription of lenses for improved vision but also enhances overall comfort for patients.”

TECH-DRIVEN EYE CARE

Murphy highlighted those new technologies are instrumental in the early detection and prevention of eye diseases and even general health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and stroke.

“Artificial intelligence (AI) in diagnostic equipment has become a game-changer. AI-infused tools can identify and predict eye diseases like cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration.

“Moreover, this technology plays a crucial role in the early detection and management of myopia (short-sightedness), potentially slowing down its progression.”

The innovations extend beyond diagnostics, encompassing corrective glasses and lenses. He explained that these innovative corrective solutions prioritise vision correction and cater to age-related changes and different lifestyles through the harmonious integration of technology into eye care.

“For example, thanks to innovation, we now have multifocal contact lenses, which enhances the lives of individuals grappling with presbyopia, especially the ageing population.

“Another example is for those with active lifestyles. We now have Bluetooth-enabled glasses, providing vision correction and eye protection for the eyes while seamlessly integrating your tunes, podcasts, and phone calls without blocking your ears.”

Looking ahead, Murphy suggested that AI and teleoptometry will play significant roles in the future of eye healthcare, emphasising the importance of ECPs to stay abreast of these innovations.

In the face of these advancements, ECPs find themselves at the forefront of change. Murphy asserted that adapting to the evolving landscape is not optional for ECPs. Instead, it is a necessity that inspires comprehensive eye examinations.

EMPOWERING PATIENTS THROUGH EDUCATION

The role of ECPs extends beyond prescription and diagnostics. They must also cater to the changing needs of



Datuk Dr Murphy Chan

patients, spanning from myopia control for children to eye health for seniors and workplace eye care for adults.

As such, continued education is paramount for ECPs in navigating the needs of patients.

“We, as ECPs, need to ensure we are equipped with knowledge in eye health management control. Continued education is part and parcel of practising optometry.”

Commenting on the Johnson & Johnson Institute Symposium ‘Beyond 2023: Revolutionising Patient Eye Care & Management’, he underscored the value of staying relevant and knowledgeable in the field.

“The symposium serves as a platform for ECPs to discuss the advancements in eye healthcare, emphasising the importance of education, communication,

and personalised care in this ever-evolving landscape.”

Murphy was one of the panelists during the ‘Eye Health Advancement & The Role Of ECP’ panel discussion session.

“Apart from that, we must educate the public, dispel misconceptions, and enhance awareness about eye health. There are many misconceptions surrounding eye care, and it is our duty as ECPs to reach out to the public, communicate and give proper advice.”

He also emphasised the importance of personalisation in eye care. “Patients will be empowered through personalised care and preventative measures.”

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS, ETHICAL PRACTICE AND MEANINGFUL STRATEGIES

Murphy emphasises that collaborative efforts within a larger ecosystem are at the heart of effective eye care.

“You can’t work alone; there is a need for a collaborative effort in eye care,” he noted, highlighting the need for seamless collaboration among optometrists and ophthalmologists.

This comprehensive strategy, he said, ensures that patients receive the best possible care, whether from ECPs or specialists. The collaborative ecosystem extends to referrals, as a commitment to the patient’s well-being.

Amidst technological developments and commercialisation, Murphy emphasised the importance of ethical practice.

“Being ethical is the foundation to building trust with patients, fostering a sense of reliability in the rapidly evolving field of eye care. And avoiding excessive commercialisation is integral to maintaining the profession’s integrity.”

He advocates a meaningful strategy beyond individual practices, encouraging ECPs to engage in community outreach, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects. – *The Health*

