

Editorial

Balancing innovation and tradition: How young ophthalmologists can blend innovative cutting-edge techniques with established methods

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Since this is a special issue authored and co-authored by young ophthalmologists (<45 years) from across the globe, it is best that the editorial is about the young souls themselves!

In the rapidly evolving field of ophthalmology, young practitioners are often likely to find themselves at unique crossroads. They carry on their shoulders the time-honoured practices and techniques from their predecessors while also facing the exciting challenges of integrating new technologies and innovations into their practice. This balance between tradition and innovation is not just a professional necessity; it is a defining feature of a current young ophthalmologist's career.

For many young ophthalmologists, the journey begins with a deep respect for the age-old traditional practices which provide a solid foundation for patient care. The precision of manual surgery, the nuanced art of patient consultation and counselling and the careful management of chronic or unusual conditions are all rooted in tradition, but these practices are not just relics of the past; they continue to exist as essential skills even today yielding excellent doctors and patient outcomes.

However, the landscape of ophthalmology is changing rapidly, driven not only by advances in technology and newer scopes of research but also by industry motives. The increasing use of artificial intelligence and the development of minimally invasive procedures are just glimpses of innovations reshaping the field.^[1] Young ophthalmologists, the 'digital natives,' adept at navigating new gadgets, applications and technologies, readily embrace these innovations with enthusiasm, which are sometimes looked at sceptically by the more 'traditional' practitioners.

How does a young ophthalmologist then integrate cutting-edge technology into practice without disregarding the

traditional, effective, and established methods? The key lies in a reflective and patient-centred approach. Young ophthalmologists must critically assess new technologies, weighing their benefits and limitations. While advanced imaging techniques can offer immense objective diagnostic accuracy, the ability to identify abnormalities with the traditional thorough subjective clinical examination cannot be undermined. Similarly, laser-assisted surgeries may offer quick recovery times and improved outcomes, but understanding the basic principles of science behind these ensures that these innovations are used judiciously and effectively. It needs to be remembered that manual techniques and human skills can often help from drowning when robots and artificial intellect fail. Balancing innovation and tradition also involves certain ethical considerations. Young ophthalmologists must ensure that the adoption of new technologies is driven by patient benefit rather than commercial pressures.

Young ophthalmologists need to perform a dual role, learning from the experiences and wisdom of the seniors while acting as conduits for new knowledge. They can foster a collaborative environment with all the involved stakeholders where innovation can be made a complement to tradition rather than a competitor.^[2]

The blend of innovation and tradition is a dynamic interplay. Young ophthalmologists are not just passive heirs to the past knowledge but also active artisans of the future. In this delicate balance between the past and the future, the present of ophthalmology finds its most promising prospects, continuing to evolve, scientific and sound, dynamic yet grounded.

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