DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENTATION

The Digital Eyecare Technology that Revolutionized How I Practice

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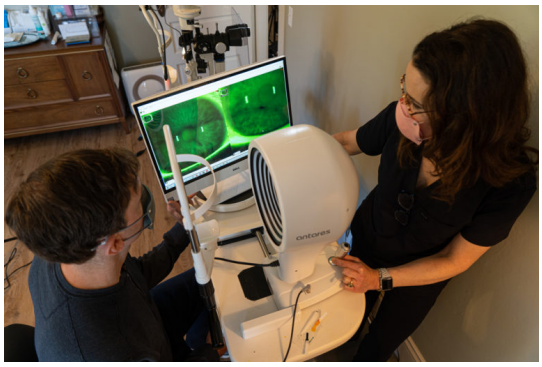
By Laura M. Periman, MD

June 8, 2022



Dr. Periman working with a patient to capture images. She says this software's impressive anterior imaging capacity continues to help her deliver a hybrid model of care that incorporates both in-office and virtual appointments.

The pandemic significantly tested every industry. Healthcare, including eyecare, was no exception.

I decided to launch my dry eye specialty practice in April 2020 in the depths of the pandemic's first wave. A silver lining was the forced workarounds many of us needed to come up with, and how those workarounds then revolutionized the way we do things.

For eyecare providers, that meant finding an alternative to seeing patients in the office, especially since our patients still needed our help.

I've always been generally tech-savvy, and I enjoy exploring new technologies. When we were cobbling together our new eye institute, for instance, we had to stack multiple IT solutions as we were unable to find fully integrated scheduling, practice management, EHR and communications platforms. I didn't want to go with the big-name electronic health systems because as a new, small clinic, we wouldn't be able to get the support we needed in the event of tech problems, and they were way overpriced. That meant we had to look at cost-effective alternatives.

Given patients' needs and requests, we sought to offer telemedicine from the outset in the interest of COVID safety. We had clinic space by June 5, 2020, but we have found telemedicine to be so effective, efficient and satisfying for patients and staff that we have kept it.

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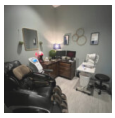
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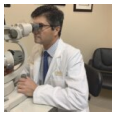
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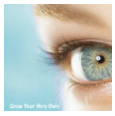
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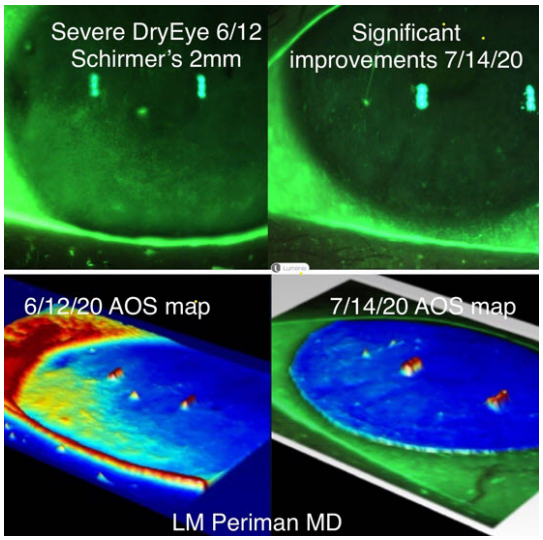
The workflow of a patient booking a telemedicine appointment with us involves the patient completing all the on-boarding forms available on our website. These HIPAA forms include dry eye questionnaires, risk factor identification and detailed medical history. An unforeseen benefit of these extensive forms has been the impact on patient education. In the process, patients develop the vocabulary they need to tell me what they are experiencing. It's a fantastic way of beginning our patients' journey, and I've been so impressed with how people have been able to effectively and efficiently communicate their dry eye story in their own words.

The active listening during extensive history intake facilitates accurate diagnosis and initiation of therapy (OTC and prescription). We help the patient "connect the dots" with patient education and discussions of potential treatment options.



Imaging Dr. Periman achieved through use of **Advanced Ophthalmic Systems (AOS)** technology. She says having the ability for this kind of imaging has changed how she practices.

Informed consent links are included in the after-telemedicine visit summary. Advanced in-office testing confirms the diagnosis and candidacy for in-office treatments. A fully integrated treatment plan is in place by the end of the first in-person visit. This goes a long way toward putting patients at ease and slowing the process down, which makes for a more relaxing experience than that of a typical doctor's office encounter.

In addition to creating an engaging patient experience, our staff reaps the rewards of telemedicine by streamlining intake forms and chart-building, which frees up significant time. This is huge for our small boutique practice with a lean workforce. The added efficiency means we're able to achieve economies of scale and see more patients.

Digital Imaging Using AOS Objective Analysis

A telemedicine platform is built into **Advanced Ophthalmic Systems (AOS)**, a software I began using before the pandemic to leverage its advanced anterior imaging capabilities. This new digital imaging technology revolutionized our ability to explain to patients exactly what's going on with their condition and objectively measure important metrics like quantifying fluorescein staining as well as conjunctival edema and injection.

In eyecare, imaging tells a story worth a thousand words. Digital imaging using AOS' objective grading technology enables us to demonstrate improvements and provide hope to patients. Sometimes just being able to visualize changes and improvements can encourage the patient that they are on the right path, making them more likely to continue with the recommended treatment pathway.

In clinical practice, precision image analysis offers a significant advantage over traditional grading scales which are fraught with inter- and intra-

observer variability. With our clinical research, the power of quantifying corneal staining and conjunctival injection facilitates finding statistical significance with a smaller number of patients, which saves studies time and money. I would love to see more objective analysis of images in clinical research. I think it would be helpful in bringing new innovations to market since there is still so much unmet need in the dry eye space.

A Hybrid Approach to Digital Eyecare

Effectively encouraging patients to stay on course with recommended therapy lends itself to a blend of remote and in-office care. This hybrid approach allows us to serve a wider range of patients. Regardless of whether a patient can travel to our clinic, I can monitor their progress, even if they're not in our area, and keep track of how they're responding to the treatment pathway. There are certain prescriptions I'm comfortable with issuing via telemedicine, but even when I'm not, telemedicine is a great way of starting the integrated treatment plan.

For example, one of my remote patients, an educated person with severe dry eye who works in medicine, had been skeptical of the possibility that advanced treatments could help. Their perspective changed after I shared AOS analyzed images of their eyes (see image above). Everything then made total sense, and they were put at ease.

Our industry has a long way to go in utilizing these new digital eyecare technologies, but the positive impact on patients and practices is already apparent. The response from even the least tech-savvy patients is positive. Our referring colleagues have enhanced confidence that we can accurately diagnose, expertly treat and track the progress of their patients.

The ability to offer these new technologies has been a differentiator for our practice.

Laura M. Periman, MD, is the Founder and Director of Dry Eye Services and Clinical Research at **Periman Eye Institute** in Seattle, Wash. She is an expert in dry eye disease treatment, and specializes in the medical treatment of corneal surface problems and minor external and ocular surface procedures.

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DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENTATION

The Technology Suite that Took Our Patient Care & Profitability to a New Level

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By Minh Ta, OD, and Nancy Truong, OD

June 1, 2022

In the clinical area of his office, Dr. Ta is reviewing the data retrieved from the VX130, VX40 and AngioVue purchased from **Visionix**. He says this technology suite has taken both patient care and profitability to an impressive level.

We pride ourselves in our practice on providing a state-of-the-art, boutique experience as well as a high level of medical diagnostic eyecare. Just as we found premium products for our optical, we continue to invest in technology that provides superior eyecare.

Here are the details on the suite of advanced technology that we've implemented our practice, enabling us to ensure a high level of care and a high level of profitability.

Over the last few years, we invested in three key instruments from Visionix USA (formerly Luneau Technology USA and Optovue Inc.): **Optovue Avanti** OCTA system, **Visionix VX130** multi-modal anterior segment analyzer and **Visionix VX40** wavefront lens analyzer.

Excellent Patient Care, Great Profitability

We use these instruments on all our patients as part of our pretesting process. Each year this suite of instruments generates around $100,000 in additional exam fees. More importantly, it allows us to flag multiple potential medical problems before the doctor has even walked into the exam room. We have significant information by the time the patient is in the exam chair to make diagnoses that can save a patient's eyesight or even save

their life in the case of an eye condition like diabetic retinopathy, which is connected to a life-threatening disease.

TO TOP

With the Visionix VX130, we can see keratoconus, dry eye, the anterior chamber via tomography as well as pachymetry-adjusted IOPs. Additionally, with the Avanti's iWellness and AngioWellness proprietary scans, we are empowered to diagnose a range of conditions, such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy with occlusions, in addition to providing us additional GCC scans of our potential and current glaucoma patients.

In most cases, the technology allows us to educate a patient about their eye health and the value of our services. For example, we recently showed a patient the solar retinopathy damage he incurred years earlier from staring at the sun. He didn't realize the lasting damage this caused and expressed to us how happy he felt that we were still able to refract him to the 20/20-acuity line!

Maximize Chair Time, Elevate Patient Education

We want as much data as we can get before seeing the patient. First and foremost, that data gives us the ability to provide the highest level of care. Secondly, it allows us to create a much more effective treatment plan. The technology, which is easy for our technicians to adopt, enables our staff to partner more fully with us in providing care. This increased support results in the doctor's time being maximized to focus less on data collection and more on the interpretation of data.

The additional consultation time we gain allows us to spend more time discussing with patients the condition in which we have diagnosed them, educating them on the implications to their eye health, and why we recommend their precise treatment plan. The added patient education time can often make the difference between a patient who follows through with the treatment plan and one who does not understand its importance and neglects to return for care.

Easy to Implement, Seamless to Optimize

Many ophthalmic technologies require adaptation, a learning curve and extensive time in practice. Complex implementation and adoption are not the case with the Visionix suite of technologies. We were up and running with our devices almost right from the start. The instruments integrated well with our electronic health record system and other medical devices such as our digital phoropter.

Clinical Application Specialists ensured new technology integration and adoption for our staff. The new **Visionix Academy** is a good reference for ways to maximize our Optovue and Visionix devices. Specific to Optovue products, the "Ask the Expert" feature is extremely useful. Our doctors and staff know that if a question regarding the use of the equipment comes up that we can't answer ourselves, there is immediate help available. That trusted support gives you confidence when adding new technology to your practice.

Brand Your Practice as "State-of-the-Art"

The integrated VX130 and VX40 offer the latest innovation in wavefront technologies. Avanti's widefield OCTA offers AngioAnalytics, Total Corneal Power (TCP) and Epithelial Thickness Mapping (ETM) features, providing the latest innovation in OCT technology.

When patients receive information about their eyes and diagnoses that make a profound difference in their lives, they will be grateful and remember to tell their friends and family about your practice. Additionally, there is an added benefit in how this high level of care changes how your practice is branded and the message you send to your community about the kind of care you provide.

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TO TOP

The screenings we offer in our office with this advanced technology are included on our patient intake forms. Patients can quickly see and understand how we will screen their eyes and work to preserve their vision. Most offices say they are state-of-the-art. We live and breathe state-of-the-art every day in our practice, and a simple visit to our office shows patients we mean what we say. Every patient has the opportunity for, and deserves, a thorough eye wellness exam.

The experience patients receive in our office spurs many of them to spread the word that, in addition to our optical boutique, we have advanced technology that makes it possible for us to do a comprehensive medical eyecare exam.

Because our patients appreciate their experience with us, our online reviews reflect that "wow" factor and boost our reputation in the community for repeat visits, referrals and new patients.

Minh Ta, OD

Nancy Truong, OD

Minh Ta, OD, and Nancy Truong, OD, are the owners of **Specs Appeal Eyecare & Eyewear** in Decatur, Ga. To contact Dr. Ta: **drta@specsappealga.com**. To contact Dr. Truong: **drtruong@specsappealga.com**

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