



Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Optometry

Background

Evidence-based decision-making can be thought of as a process in which clinical decisions are made in light of the best research evidence, the practitioner's existing expertise and knowledge, and the patient's needs and preferences within the context of the clinic environment.ⁱ Evidence-based decision-making is an important element of quality care in a wide range of health services and is integral to effect changes across the health care system.ⁱⁱ

Health researchers and authorities recognize formal categories of clinical evidence and these are regularly reviewed and ranked in order of apparent strength. This includes evidence obtained from: systematic reviews of all relevant randomized controlled trials; a properly designed randomized controlled trial; comparative studies; cases series, and others.ⁱⁱⁱ

Policy Issue

As primary care practitioners, optometrists are well-positioned to detect the early signs of vision problems, eye health issues, and systemic diseases. Careful and considered application of an evidence-based approach may help optometrists to make timely and correct diagnoses.^{iv} An evidence-based approach may also assist optometrists to make informed decisions regarding effective treatment options.

Policy position

Optometrists should carry out evidence-based decision-making in consideration of research evidence, experience, and knowledge wherever possible, including when collaborating with other health care professionals to deliver patient care. An evidence-based approach should also extend to optometrists working in research, education, and regulation, as appropriate.

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References:

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