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SEPTEMBER
2019



ARE YOU GOING WITH THE FLOW?

Dial in an effective plan for
handling patient flow + walk-ins
in corporate optometry for a
successful practice

PAGE 10

6 Qs
with Optical Retail
Guru Dean Butler

+

3 Simple
Give-Back Programs
for Your Practice

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SEPTEMBER
2019



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Surprise! Walk-in patients are a fact of life for corporate optometry practice. Here, 3 seasoned corporate O.D.s share their strategies for working in the walk-ins efficiently.

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The *COT!* Interview

Dean Butler knows a thing or two about optical retail. He founded Lens-Crafters in 1983 and, in the UK, Vision Express in 1998. Outspoken and insightful, Butler is forthright with his answers to *COT!*'s questions about chain retail, corporate optometry, and more.



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*Average 2018 1st ticket sales in an optometric practice that accepts CareCredit.



Riding the Wave.

This issue is all about ebb and flow. Are you going with it? In our cover feature, we dig into the critical topic of how to handle patient flow in corporate optometry, where walk-ins are a must-factor fact of life.

Think walk-ins are a distraction and make efficiency difficult to manage? One of our experts—Joseph Alexander Gowen, O.D., who is leasing from Eyemart Express in Pueblo, CO—has a very different perspective. “I am a big fan of walk-ins in our practice,” he says, with an eye to this patient component as a pure practice builder.

“Walk-ins are a practice builder. It’s rare that we get behind or work over. It just takes the time to figure out your metric and plan it.”

—Sean Deak, O.D., subleasing from Walmart in Shelbyville and Greensburg, IN, tells us in this issue’s **Patient Overflow?** feature

For three smart strategies for managing walk-in traffic in the mix of a full day in practice, check out our **Patient Overflow?** feature (starting on page 10), penned by *Corporate Optometry Today!*’s contributing editor, Maria Sampalis, O.D.

On page 8 in our **Get Involved** Business Insider column, *Eyecare Business* Editorial Director Emeritus Stephanie K. De Long puts the focus on how O.D.s, including those in the corporate realm, can easily and seamlessly get involved with a worthwhile giveback effort for their practice. Here, she outlines three easy-



to-implement programs from Essilor Vision Foundation and the American Optometric Association’s Optometry Cares initiative, to help optometrists support their own communities with vision care and eyewear for those in need.

There’s also much, much more in this content-rich issue of *COT!*, so keep on turning the pages. Not to be missed is our exclusive + enlightening interview with **Dean Butler**, founder of LensCrafters and the UK’s Vision Express—and now on several boards, living in a 410-year-old manor house in Worcestershire, England and hand-raising baby peacocks. Here, he answers *COT!*’s 6 big questions—and believe us, you’ll want to read his feedback.

Want more? **Check out our Facebook page: @CorporateOptometryToday!**

We hope you enjoy the issue!

Erinn Morgan

Editor-in-Chief + Editorial Director
Corporate Optometry Today! + *Eyecare Business*

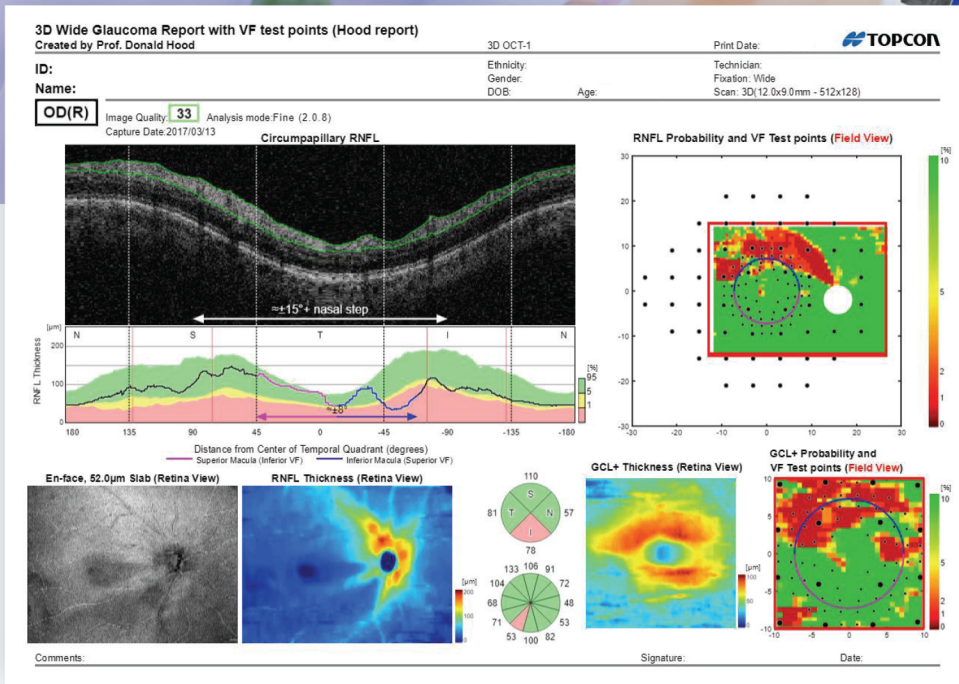


In this issue of *COT!*, we chat with 3 corporate O.D.s who share their expert strategies for accommodating patient walk-ins.



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*In the Maestro Hood H f ehj eh Bk Yec W the position of the fovea relative to the disc center is normalized to -7 degree rotation to compensate for head tilt.

* Professor Donald C Hood, Department of Ophthalmology & Department of Psychology, Columbia Univ. New York

* This report is only for use on 3D OCT-1 Maestro in combination with IMAGEnet 6 version 6.0



YOUR VISION. OUR FOCUS.

TREND TRACKER

COT! PINPOINTS THE KEY TRENDS OF INTEREST FOR CORPORATE OPTOMETRISTS



VSP, EssilorLuxottica Move Further Into Corporate Retail

Two of optical's biggest players are moving deeper into the corporate optometry landscape.

In June, VSP Global announced an agreement to acquire **Visionworks**, the sixth-largest optical chain in the country with 700+ locations in 40 states. VSP executives touted the move as one that will improve services to members.

In July, EssilorLuxottica reached an agreement to acquire **Grand-Vision, N.V.**, with 7,200 global locations. In the U.S., its largest corporate retail banner is For Eyes. After closing, the GrandVision organization will operate EssilorLuxottica's retail activities in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, while the EssilorLuxottica organization will run the retail networks in the Americas. —*Susan Tarrant*

+ SHOPKO OPTICAL EXPANDS

From the bankruptcy of the Shopko department store chain comes Shopko Optical, which has already opened about two dozen free-standing optical locations with the goal of launching a total of 80. Shopko Optical named former Visionworks head Jim Eisen as interim CEO to help the company through its transition. shopko.com

The Daily Trend

Are you moving your contact lens patients over to daily replacement lenses? Many of your peers are. A study by CooperVision revealed 79% of U.S. ECPs surveyed are refitting their frequent wearers to **one-day contact lenses**, and feel it's a trend that will continue.



The study of ECPs and patients in Europe and the U.S. also found:

- **The ECP is driving the change:** 69% of patients report they make their final lens choice based on ECP recommendation.
- **Eye health + comfort are behind the shift.** In 70% of switching cases, ECPs suggested the change because of patient issues with previous contact lenses. ECPs cited general and long-term eye health, comfort, and better fit for patient lifestyle. —*S.T.*

Giving Globally

Eyeglass World, part of the National Vision group of optical retail brands, is rolling out a **"Made Locally, Given Globally"** philanthropic program. For every pair of eyewear purchased, another pair will be made at the in-store lab and donated to someone with vision impairment around the world.

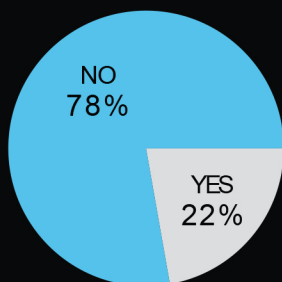


Eyeglass World has been piloting the program for the past year in Michigan and Indiana, during which more than 11,000 pairs of eyeglasses were created by Eyeglass World associates to be distributed through philanthropic partnerships.

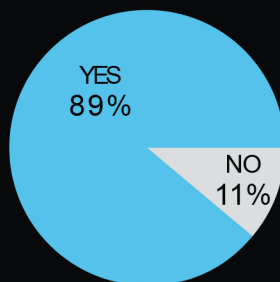
"[Customers] want to know that the company they buy from is invested in making a difference in the world," says Jacqueline Grove, senior vice president of retail operations of Eyeglass World. —*S.T.*

A RECENT STUDY OF 265 LARGE RETAILER PATIENTS SHOWS:

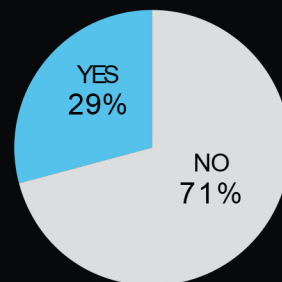
Do you like the "Puff Test"?



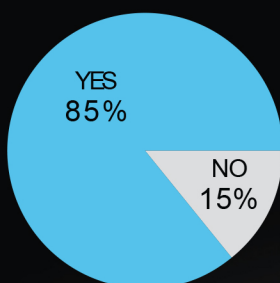
Is the new test more comfortable than the "Puff Test"?



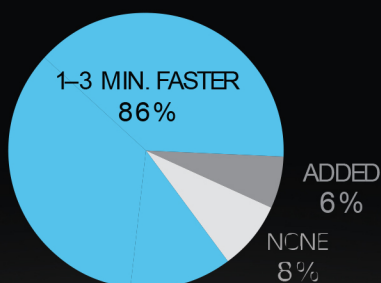
Would you visit the eye doctor sooner if you did not have the "Puff Test"?



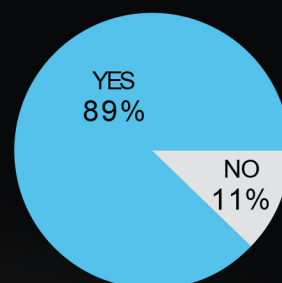
Would you return/recommend this retailer to your friends or family because of the new "NO PUFF" test?



TECHNICIAN RESPONSE
How much time did you save with the Icare tonometer with this patient?



TECHNICIAN RESPONSE
In your opinion, did the patient like the Icare tonometer better than the NCT?



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Get Involved

How to **help kids in need** see + learn better

THOUGH 80% OF ALL VISION impairment can be prevented or cured, 1 out of every 4 kids in the U.S. still has a vision problem that can affect their ability to learn.

You've seen it in your practice. It's evident in your community.

And, that problem is exacerbated by the fact that these children often aren't aware that their blurred vision isn't normal.

What can you as a corporate optometrist do to give back and help those who don't have the resources to help themselves? That void is exactly what the Essilor Vision Foundation (EVF) is working to fill. In fact, since its inception in 2007, EVF has donated 1 million pairs of glasses to people in need in the U.S.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

How can you contribute and make a difference? EVF has created three programs designed to help optometrists like you get engaged and to help you support your own and nearby communities with vision care and glasses young people need.

» PROMOTE CHILDREN'S VISION.

Through the See Kids Soar initiative, you can get a free marketing kit that will help you educate others in the community about children's vision needs throughout the country. evfusa.org/bettersightenrollment

» ORDER CHARITABLE GLASSES.

Participate in Changing Life through Lenses by enrolling in an account to receive free glasses for your

4 PRACTICE PLUSES

How does giving benefit you and your practice?

1. Differentiates and brings awareness to your practice.
2. Improves staff engagement.
3. Increases patient loyalty and traffic.
4. Solves a very real problem in your community.

community-based charitable efforts. changinglifethroughlenses.org

» HEALTHY EYES, HEALTHY CHILDREN.

Working in conjunction with the American Optometric Association's Optometry Cares initiative, HEHC offers grants annually to increase vision service in communities. aoafoundation.org/hehc/

Without programs like these, millions of children across the country would have no access to vision services. Help make a difference, and make giving back a part of who you are. **COT!** —*Stephanie K. De Long*

A black and white close-up photograph of a woman with light-colored, wavy hair pulled back. She is wearing dark-rimmed glasses and a dark denim jacket. Her expression is neutral and focused. The background is blurred, showing a hand near her head and some bokeh light spots.

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Patient Overflow?

3 corporate O.D.s share their expert strategies for accommodating walk-in patients

BY MARIA SAMPALIS, O.D.

How do you accommodate walk-ins when you have an already busy patient schedule? That's a common question in optometry, and it's definitely a situation O.D.s have to deal with if they work in corporate optometry.

Corporate optometry settings get a lot of foot traffic because many of these opticals are located in retail locations (malls, shopping plazas, etc.). Furthermore, they benefit from the national marketing efforts of their optical brand. Subleasing space in corporate optometry can be very lucrative, and being able to handle the large patient volume and accommodate walk-ins as well is important for the success of your practice.

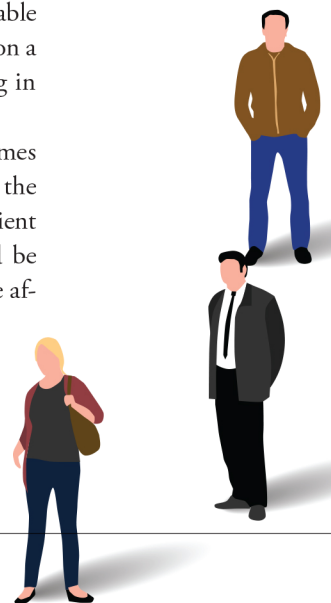
We asked the members of the

Corporate Optometry Facebook Group how they accommodate unexpected walk-ins when their schedule is already busy. Here, some strategies they've set in motion to work in patients on the fly, and increase revenue for their practice.

ANTICIPATE + LEAVE ROOM.

Determine a set number of scheduled patients whom you can see per day, in order to accommodate the inevitable walk-ins. Train all staff members on a predetermined protocol for fitting in a walk-in as needed.

Leave certain appointment times open during the day to handle the walk-ins and the surprise patient calls. A common example would be to leave one morning spot and one afternoon spot open for walk-ins.





“Walk-ins are a practice builder.
It’s rare that we get behind or work over.
It just takes the time to figure out
your metric and plan it.”

—SEAN DEAK, O.D., SUBLEASING FROM
WALMART IN SHELBYVILLE AND
GREENSBURG, IN



**ANDREW
BLANKENSHIP, O.D.**

➤ PUTTING IT IN PRACTICE:

“An O.D. can only see a certain number of patients per day given how many exam rooms they have. For me, I limit myself to 35 patients max per day. If a patient walks in, and if the schedule allows it, we’ll of course work them in. If not, we book them for the next available.

“I don’t have to worry about losing the walk-in, because where I am there’s not much competition. All the O.D.s are booked out two to four weeks, so the chances of that patient going elsewhere for a walk-in are zero.”

—**Andrew Blankenship, O.D.**,
owner, *Angelo Eye Center*
next to a *Walmart Optical* in
San Angelo, TX

**ACCOMMODATE, WITH
A SMILE.**

Walk-in patients are a nice revenue boost for your practice. Don’t view them as an inconvenience to your daily schedule; look at them as a practice builder. Those patients are willing to make purchases—in fact, they sought you out to do so.

Patients will remember that you accommodated them and made them feel welcome, and that is likely to increase patient retention and loyalty. Thinking outside the box to be able to accommodate these patients is important to your business.

For instance, walk-ins can be escorted to the optical to pick out glasses first, then come back to have an eye exam when your office is able to fit them into the schedule.



**JOSEPH
ALEXANDER
GOWEN, O.D.**

➤ PUTTING IT IN PRACTICE:

“I am a big fan of walk-ins in our practice. If we are slammed, we let the walk-ins know there will be a wait, have them fill out their paperwork and go look at frames until they are called back. Occasionally, they will schedule for later if they can’t wait, but most don’t mind waiting, and we always prioritize our scheduled appointments. The only time we turn away walk-ins is right before lunch or at the end of the day.”

—**Joseph Alexander Gowen, O.D.**, leasing from *Eyemart Express* in *Pueblo, CO*

ANALYZE WITH KPIS.

Develop key performance indicators that will help you create a walk-in schedule. Evaluate your typical patient flow and map out the busiest times in your schedule, then come up with an action plan for walk-ins.

Have business metrics that can help guide you in planning a daily schedule and invest in technology

that can create practice efficiency to accommodate those walk-ins.

Typically, corporate opticals can have one to three walk-in patients a day, depending on the day of the week or time of the year. If an average patient transaction is \$80 and there are seven walk-ins a week, the total extra revenue for the practice is \$560 a week.



“I am a big fan of walk-ins in our practice. If we are slammed, we let the walk-ins know there will be a wait, have them fill out their paperwork and go look at frames until they are called back.”

—**JOSEPH ALEXANDER GOWEN, O.D.**,
LEASING FROM *EYEMART EXPRESS* IN
PUEBLO, CO

That equals an average of \$29,000 of extra revenue annually from walk-in appointments.

→ **PUTTING IT IN PRACTICE:**

“Over the years, we have tracked the approximate number of walk-ins, no-shows, extra-time patients, etc., that happen throughout the day. We leave openings for walk-ins based on that met-

ric, and we usually are very good at breaking even on accommodating everyone and filling the time completely. Walk-ins are a practice builder. It’s rare that we get behind or work over. It just takes time to figure out your metric and plan it.”

—*Sean Deak, O.D.,
subleasing from Walmart in
Shelbyville and Greensburg, IN*

Corporate optometry practices have a wide range of patient demographics who come to us for affordable, convenient, and reliable care. The offices are designed to see a high volume of scheduled patients, as well as accommodate walk-in appointments. Using these strategies, you can learn to work in the walk-ins, increase your revenue, and elevate your corporate practice. **COT!**



MARIA SAMPALIS, O.D.,

is the founder of the Corporate Optometry group on Facebook and corporateoptometry.com. Currently, she is owner of Sampalis Eye Care in Cranston, RI, and has a sublease at For Eyes by GrandVision in Rhode Island.

MORE ONLINE

Join the “Corporate Optometry on Facebook” group ([facebook.com/groups/corporateoptometry](https://www.facebook.com/groups/corporateoptometry)).





“The most interesting new [optical] model is Brillen.de in Germany. It’s a lead generation business that is sending patients to traditional optometrists.”

THE
INSIDE LINE...
WITH

Dean Butler

COT! sits down with the founder of LensCrafters to get his forthright take on chain retailing + corporate optometry today BY STEPHANIE K. DE LONG

Dean Butler knows a thing or two about optical retail. He founded LensCrafters in 1983 and, in the U.K., Vision Express in 1998. And there he stayed.

"I moved abroad to head the business and stayed because I like rural England," he says. "I'm living in a 410-year-old manor house in the middle of nowhere in Worcestershire. I can't see another house in any direction."

Retired? Not exactly. He's currently on the boards of directors of several companies abroad, including eyeBrain/neurolenses, SuperVista AG (brillen.de), and eyoto. And, the day *COT!* caught up with him, he was at a garden party in Hamburg, Germany, and heading to Berlin, Paris, London, and then home over the next three days. So much for retirement!

Outspoken and insightful, Butler was forthright with his answers to *COT!*'s questions about chain retail, corporate optometry, and more.

MOTIVATOR

Q: What works today?

A. What works now (and always has) is acknowledging that optical is a retail business with an important medical component, not the other way around.

Health care is not the motivator for most consumers.

CONSUMERS

Q: Then what is?

A. They are finally realizing that eyeglasses do not have to be expensive. There's far less regulation of optical retailing and optometry abroad. That keeps prices lower and availability high...producing lots of consumer benefits.

FORMATS

Q: You've seen and worked with many optical formats. What stands out now?

A. The most interesting new model is brillen.de in Germany. It's a lead generation business that is sending patients to traditional optometrists. Product is high quality and supplied by brillen.de. Revenues are shared with the optometrists, and because the product comes directly from manufacturers, the margins enjoyed by participating O.D.s are strong.

MORPHING

Q: What's next for optical retail in the U.S.?

A. Private equity roll-ups will soon morph into new chains, and traditional

private practice is dying. The net result is that the U.S. market will be 75%-80% chains, and the remaining private practitioners will have to differentiate themselves to survive. The best differentiators? Neurolenses and myopia treatment...solutions to real problems.

FOCUS

Q: Do you have any suggestions for young O.D.s?

A. Corporate optometry is the future—for lots of reasons. It's becoming more and more attractive because corporate O.D.s can enjoy focusing on being eye doctors while someone else does the nitty-gritty of practice and retail management. Today, 70% of new optometry graduates are women, and the flexibility of corporate practice is especially suited and very attractive to them.

Q: How do you think technology will impact optometry?

A. Dead-accurate remote refraction is just around the corner. That will result over time in de-facto separation of acuity testing/Rx determination and health checks. Optometrists will focus more and more on eye health and less and less on refractions. We are likely to wind up with Rx production outside of optometry. **COT!**

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Ian Ymalay, O.D.



Ian Ymalay, O.D.

Ian Ymalay, O.D., has been practicing at America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses locations in Chicago since graduating from Illinois College of Optometry (ICO) in 2007. "My mom is an optometrist," says Dr. Ymalay, "and I always wanted to be in health care."

► Dr. Ymalay highlights ocular pathology found in corporate optometry on @corporate_retina on Instagram.

1 CORPORATE.
"It offers advantages like ample time off, great salary, and a **focus on eye care** vs. the 'business of optometry.'"

2 EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM.
"America's Best has become an externship site for Pennsylvania College of Optometry, ICO, and Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry (IAUPRO). I'm a preceptor for both the ICO and IAUPRO."

3 STUDENTS.
"The response has been overwhelming. Students get to see a large number of patients with varying conditions, enhancing awareness of corporate optometry."

4 PRECEPTOR.
"I'm honored to have been named Preceptor of the Year at ICO. My rotation is primary care and contact lens. We also spend time on nonclinical items as they enter the workforce." **COT!**

—Stephanie K. De Long



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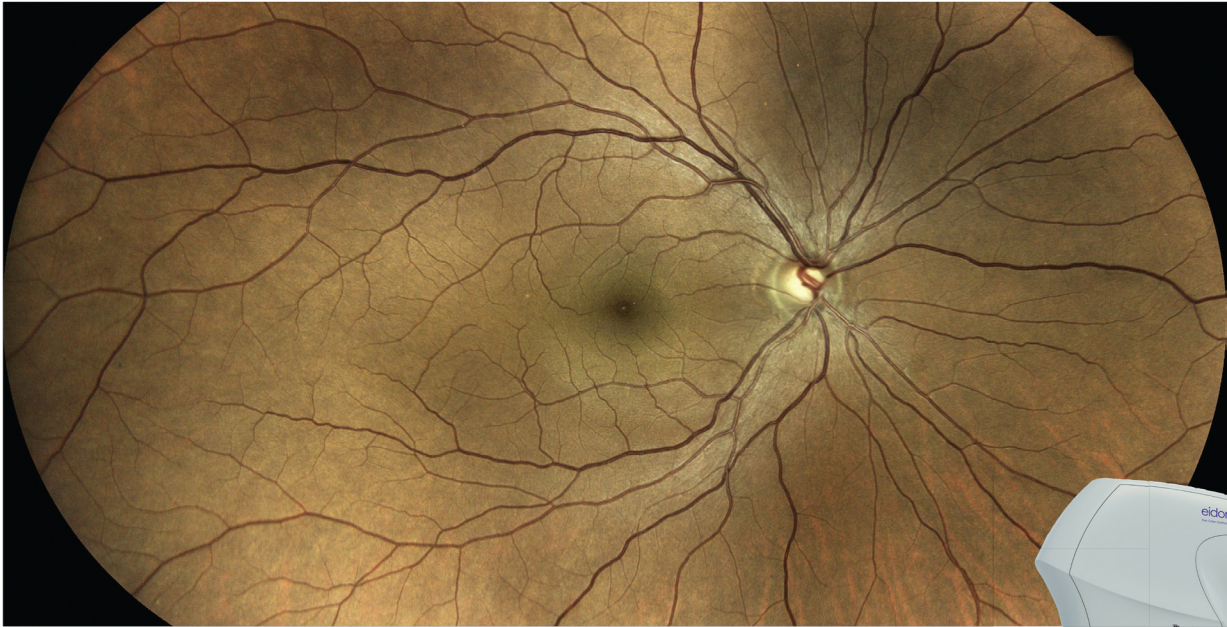
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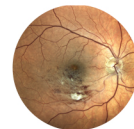
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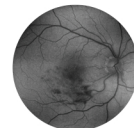
EIDON Wide-Field Mosaic

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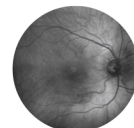
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