

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

What's Happening

Share Your Eye Injury Cases This Month

A busy mother cleaning her oven without eye protection splashes chemicals in her eyes, requiring an emergency trip to the ophthalmologist. While this scenario might sound familiar to ophthalmologists, last year's Academy public survey showed that it's not what comes to mind when nonphysicians think of eye injuries.

Through this month's sixth annual Eye Injury Snapshot, the Academy is working to change that by asking all ophthalmologists, ophthalmology residents and emergency room physicians to report every eye injury treated during the week of May 17.

In past years, physicians submitting eye injury reports said that about half of the injuries could have been avoided through patient education or the use of protective eyewear. Part of such education is correcting people's misperceptions about the settings and activities that present a risk of eye injuries. Through the



THE EYE INJURY SNAPSHOT. The sixth annual Snapshot project takes place May 17 to 24.

Last year's participation in the Snapshot project yielded more than 750 reports and produced a range of significant summary points. Overall, accidents were the primary cause of eye injuries, and these occurred mostly in the home. While the prognosis for the majority of patients was quite good, about one in seven suffered moderate to severe eye injuries, including loss of vision. In addition, many of the injuries could have been prevented had patients worn appropriate protective eyewear and/or had received education about proper eye protection.

To view the full analysis, visit www.aao.org/snapshot and click "2008 Eye Injury Snapshot Results."

Eye Injury Snapshot, the Academy and its partner, the American Society of Ocular Trauma, receive a host of new data on when, where and how eye injuries occur throughout the country.

These findings are in turn used to generate news coverage that can educate the public.

Participating in this year's snapshot is easy. A one-page questionnaire can be downloaded at www.aao.org/snapshot and submitted electronically or via fax.

FYI

Membership Dues for 2009—A Reminder

Have you paid your 2009 membership dues? The Academy must receive your payment by June 1 to guarantee that you continue to enjoy the many benefits of membership, which include uninterrupted delivery of the specialty's leading peer-

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CODES IN THE CROSSHAIRS:

The RUC reviews codes that may be misvalued.

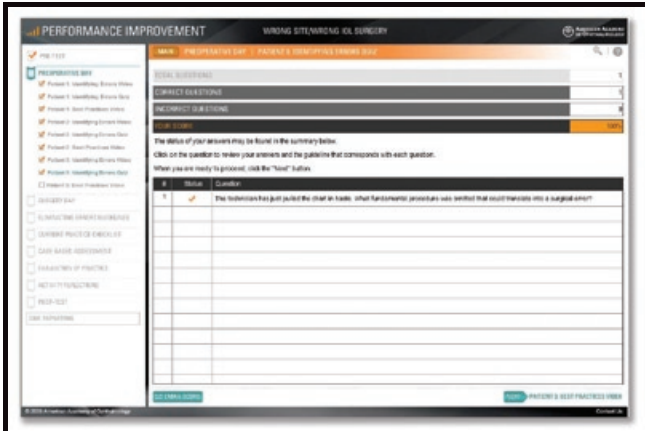
reviewed and clinical news publications, *Ophthalmology* and *EyeNet Magazine*.

Renew your membership and pay your dues online at www.aao.org/member/paydues, by phone at 866-561-8558 (toll-free in the United States) or 415-561-8581, or by fax at 415-561-8575.

Serve Your Colleagues

By volunteering on one of the more than 60 Academy committees, you can help the Academy serve its members more effectively.

In early summer, the Academy will compile a registry of members who want to volunteer. This registry will help the Academy's president-elect and committee chairs to make committee selections for 2010. To be eligible, you must be



IMPROVE YOUR SURGERIES. To help ophthalmologists avoid wrong-site and wrong-IOL surgical errors, the Academy offers a variety of performance improvement CME activities on the Ophthalmic News & Education (O.N.E.) Network. Videos provide examples of when and how surgical errors may occur, and multiple-choice quizzes test your knowledge about correct procedures. Guidelines, checklists and practice evaluations are also available.

To access these activities, visit www.aao.org/PI.

a voting fellow, member or international member.

To volunteer for committee service, visit www.aao.org/committee-volunteer.

Read each committee's mission statement before indicating whether you are available to serve on it.

Visit the Academy Abroad

The Academy will exhibit at two upcoming ophthalmology meetings. Be sure to stop by the booth and browse the latest Academy products, learn about membership and get information on the Joint Meeting in

October.

- **May 16–19:** Asia-Pacific Association of Ophthalmology, Bali, Indonesia, Booth #P16.

- **June 13–16:** European Society of Ophthalmology, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Booth #1002.

For more information, visit www.aao.org/meetings/aa-exhibits.cfm.

Research Grant Deadline Approaching

Allergan will be accepting applications for its Horizon grant program through May 29. The program provides funding to medical depart-

ments to support fellows seeking careers in medicine and conducting research in the diagnosis or treatment of glaucoma and corneal and retinal diseases. Each grant will be awarded in the amount of \$50,000.

For more information, visit www.allerganhorizongrants.com.

Academy Store

Focal Points 2009 and 2008 Back Issues Now Available

Each *Focal Points* module combines the latest research findings with concise clinical discussions on the diagnosis and treatment of a specific disease or condition.

Purchase of the 2009 print version includes access to *Focal Points Online*, which features video clips and direct links to online references. Subscribers also have the option of receiving only the online version at a reduced price. While the print modules will be mailed in four quarterly packets, online modules are published monthly.

Upcoming modules for 2009 include *Angle Closure Glaucoma Update*, *Management of Dislocated Intraocular Lenses* and *Intravitreal Injections*. Back issues from 2008 are also available, including *Current Trends and Challenges in Glaucoma Care*, *Herpetic Corneal Infections* and *Managing Accommodative Esotropia Patients and Their Parents*.

A one-year subscription for the combined 2009

print/online *Focal Points* package is \$175 for members and \$235 nonmembers. The online-only version is \$145 for members and \$195 for nonmembers. Individual modules and 2008 back issues are \$20 for members and \$40 for nonmembers.

For a free sample of a past online module, visit www.aao.org/focalpoints.

New Patient Education Products

The Academy has a variety of materials to help you save time when explaining various IOL options to patients:

- The *Understanding IOL Options for Cataract Surgery* DVD (#050120) is \$225 for members and \$295 nonmembers.

- *Enhanced Lens Options for Cataract Surgery* booklets (#052024) are available in packs of 20. Each pack is \$44 for members and \$55 for nonmembers.

- *Multifocal and Accommodative IOLs* brochures (#051135) are available in packs of 100. Each pack is \$32 for members and \$40 for nonmembers.

- *Intraocular Lenses* eye fact sheets (#057152) are available in packs of 25. Each pack is \$9 for members and \$11 for nonmembers.

To view DVD sample clips, visit www.aao.org/ioloptionsdvd. PDF samples of print products are also available at www.aao.org/patientedproducts.

Increase Your Practice's Efficiency

The American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives has many resources to help you keep an eye on efficiency:

- *Operating Policies & Procedures Manual for Medi-*

Did You Know?

Academy membership will pay off when it comes to the Joint Meeting in San Francisco. Active members do not have to pay a registration fee, and they receive priority registration and housing selection. Members-only registration opens June 24, when Academy members can reserve their preferred hotel and sign up for courses, labs and Breakfast with the Experts roundtables. Nonmember registration opens on July 8.

For more information, visit www.aao.org/2009.

cal Practices, 3rd Edition (#012183) is an easy-to-use reference complete with a CD featuring customizable medical office policies and procedures. It is \$135 for members and \$211 for nonmembers.

- *Mastering Patient Flow*, 3rd Edition (#012181) helps practices structure workflow improvements and learn techniques to maximize time and space utilization. It is \$102 for members and \$112 for nonmembers.
- The *2009 ICD-9 for Ophthalmology* (#012353) helps staff quickly locate ophthalmology-specific codes that correctly reflect diagnoses. It is \$60 for members and \$80 for nonmembers.
- The *2009 CPT Pocket Guide for Ophthalmology* (#012352) contains ophthalmology-specific codes, modifiers and descriptions. It is \$39 for members and \$51 for nonmembers.

Improve Your Practice's Bottom Line

40 Ways to Raise Revenue and Cut Costs (#012161) is a 24-page booklet that offers practical tips on how to increase reimbursements, build your patient base, improve office efficiency, negotiate with payers and vendors and monitor your budget. It is \$25 for members and \$40 for nonmembers.

Academy Store

To order products from the Academy Store, visit www.aaao.org/store or phone the Academy Service Center at 866-561-8558 (toll-free in the United States) or 415-561-8540.

This booklet is also part of *The Practice Success Kit: A Collection of Ophthalmic Executive's Resource Guides* (#012165), a set of nine modules covering important practice management issues such as information technology, human resources, risk management and business development. The collection is \$240 for members and \$325 for nonmembers.

Members At Large

Georgia Society Helps Sponsor Night of Spectacles

The Georgia Society of Ophthalmology (GSO) cosponsored last month's Night of Spectacles. The annual eyewear fashion event is presented by the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation. All proceeds fund the Lighthouse's vision services for the state's uninsured and underinsured. "Over 150 GSO members have volunteered their services with the Lighthouse Foundation either by staffing its vision clinics or performing eye surgeries," said GSO immediate past president G. Baker Hubbard III, MD.

The most unique element of this event was born through the Lighthouse's partnership with local design schools Brenau University and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Students designed dresses made from recycled eyewear. These dresses were featured in a fashion show judged by local celebrities. Winners received scholarships, and their designs were

WASHINGTON REPORT

The Rolling Review of Ophthalmology Codes

Some high-profile, high-volume ophthalmology codes are in the crosshairs as the AMA/Specialty Society Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC) has stepped up its efforts to review codes that may be inappropriately valued. The RUC recently decided that 67028, *intravitreal injection, 92135, scanning computerized ophthalmic diagnostic imaging, posterior segment (OCT)* and 92285, *external photography* should be surveyed for consideration of their work values. The Academy will launch the surveys this spring and summer for presentation at the RUC meeting this October.

It is easy to see why Medicare has these services in its sights. In 2007, ophthalmologists billed 816,500 intravitreal injections with a national Medicare payment rate of \$180 each, or \$147 million total. Similarly, OCT was billed 6.4 million times at a rate of \$42, or \$269 million total. Through the surveys, the Academy will make a case for the physician work and practice expenses involved with these services.

Watch for the Academy's *Washington Report Express* and other Academy communications for calls to participate in upcoming coding surveys.

These codes were also among the 114 identified by CMS as the fastest-growing services in Medicare or services that have never had a RUC work-value survey. The RUC discussed 67028, 92135, 92285 and 92136, *ophthalmic biometry* at its January meeting and has previously accepted the Academy's clinical explanation for the increased utilization of 67028 and 76513, *ultrasound*.

The rolling review of codes is being conducted by the RUC's Five-Year Review Identification Workgroup. The work group has reviewed more than 275 services that it found to be potentially misvalued. Its efforts are a response to pressure from the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee and Congress for the RUC to review codes that may be inappropriately valued—including overvalued—as part of the overall five-year review.

Last year, the Academy submitted work plans for the first round of services identified by the RUC and provided explanations of values and utilization to defend eight ophthalmic services. This information was instrumental in the successful defense of the cataract and complex cataract codes, which did not have to be surveyed as part of this process. Their work values will stay the same.

In addition, three codes were surveyed through this process last year, including 65285, *repair of laceration; cornea and/or sclera, perforating, with reposition or resection of uveal tissue*; 67225, *destruction of localized lesion of choroid, photodynamic therapy, second eye, at single session*; and 68810, *probing of nasolacrimal duct*. The surveys upheld their existing values.

WE HOPE YOU CAN

Join Us

2009 International Meetings

The American Academy of Ophthalmology participates in ophthalmic meetings around the world each year to enhance ophthalmic education and to promote the benefits of Academy membership.

Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology

(APAO) 24th Congress of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology

May 16–19 : Bali, Indonesia

www.apao2009bali.org

Advance Registration Deadline: May 5

Academy Booth: P16

Academy Symposia:

May 16 at 16:00

Keratoconus, Ectasia and Related Thinning Disorders

May 16 at 16:00

Urgent Diagnoses in Neuro-Ophthalmology

May 17 at 11:00

Leadership in Medicine

www.aao.org/international

If you would like to participate in the Academy's international meeting programs, please e-mail Annamarie Hastings at ahastings@aao.org.



**AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**

The Eye M.D. Association



COMMUNITY SERVICE IN GEORGIA. Last month, the Georgia Society of Ophthalmology (GSO) helped plan the second annual Night of Spectacles and secure corporate sponsorships and silent auction donations. "This is a unique and wonderful way for members of the GSO to give back to the community," said Dr. Hubbard, pictured here with fellow GSO member Mary G. Lynch, MD.

auctioned to benefit the Lighthouse.

"Community service is certainly an important component of a well-rounded state ophthalmology society," said Dr. Hubbard. "The GSO has a strong commitment to the community, and we were very proud to raise money to help the Lighthouse. For instance, the \$53,000 raised at last year's event went directly toward providing cataract surgeries, dilated exams, glasses and laser treatments for uninsured Georgians," he said. "We raised our sights for

2009 and were once again successful."

People

In February, The Alcon Research Institute awarded **Emily Y. Chew, MD**, and **Frederick L. Ferris III, MD**, both of the NEI, with its Ophthalmology Research Award. They will share \$100,000 to continue their research.

Drs. Chew and Ferris focus on human population studies concerned with the cause, prevention and treatment of eye disease and vision disorders.



DRS. CHEW AND FERRIS. Selected as 2009 Ophthalmology Research Award recipients.