

Letters

Age Should Be Celebrated

In response to “The Graying of Ophthalmology” by Ruth D. Williams, MD (Opinion, April), the most important factor in deciding when to retire is the practitioner’s attitude about maintaining skills and continual self-improvement.

If the physician is mentally or physically unable or unwilling to continually update his/her medical and surgical skill set, then that physician should limit or end medical practice regardless of age or years in practice. On the other hand, if the physician is mentally and physically capable of providing excellent care, the timing of retirement should be based on the physician’s own personal goals and desires.

Establishing an arbitrary numerical age for full retirement would simply deprive patients of competent, caring, and motivated physicians while overlooking other physicians whose surgical or diagnostic skills may not be up to par. Who decides what the standards are and how the standards are enforced is the subject of another discussion. As Sheldon Cooper in *The Big Bang Theory* would say, “That’s a sticky wicket.”

Experienced ophthalmologists are just like experienced drivers in that they have developed instinctive, quick, and accurate reactions. The “brain drain” of experienced clinicians should be discouraged. Everyone benefits from tapping their knowledge and experience.

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Evolution of Practice

I am glad that Ruth D. Williams, MD, wrote “Is Burnout a Symptom of Moral Injury?” (Opinion, June) to address this timely issue. In my practice, scribes have helped me to focus better on the patient in spite of our EHR. However, I often find myself in conflict with payers over insurance coverage. Other financial issues also contribute significant stress. For example, I find myself trying to avoid the appearance of seeking financial gain when proposing noncovered services.

Ophthalmic practice is quite different from when I started out 20 years ago. It is an excellent time for quality care, with many new treatment options at our disposal. Unfortunately, dealing with corporate and financial pressures will become more difficult as the complexities of practice mount and resource tightening continues.

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