

Challenges and opportunities for optometry and optics in Europe debated at ROME2019 conference

More than 700 delegates attended the 11th annual conference of the European Academy of Optometry and Optics, which was co-organized with Federottica, together with AdOO, ALOeO and SOPTI in Rome, on 18-19-20 May. The conference was held at the same time as the ECOO Spring General Assembly.

[“Challenges and opportunities for optometry and optics in Europe”](#) was the broad theme that set the scene for forward-looking and solution-oriented discussions involving key opinion leaders, practitioners and researchers. The conference offered a platform for specialists from over 20 countries to discuss and share latest research, education and clinical practice in optometry, optics and dispensing, and vision science.

This theme was reflected throughout the conference [programme](#). Evidence is mounting that myopia is on the rise around the world. Keynote speaker Professor Ian Flitcroft explained that many clinical trials have been conducted over the past decade, which show that the progression of myopia can be reduced by 30-70%. For him, active management of myopia progression requires new clinical approaches and a thorough understanding of both how myopia develops as well as available treatments.

Professor David Elliott, from the School of Optometry & Vision Science, University of Bradford (United Kingdom) focused on visual impairment as a significant risk factor for falls in the elderly population. He gave guidance on how optometrists and dispensing opticians can identify patients who might be at increased falls risk and how they can play their part in preventing falls in the first place –particularly in relation to the type of spectacle lens and refractive correction prescribed to elderly frail patients.

Jean-Philippe Sayag, entrepreneur and CEO of Acep, touched upon the challenges professionals face in finding new and exciting ways to engage the modern, “digital” consumer. Presenting different case studies – including from other industries such as fashion retail stores, he showed how new technologies have shaped new consumer habits. Optical retailers need to adapt and take into account new strategies in order to stay relevant. For him, owning the end-to-end customer journey is the key to success.

The conference also saw the first joint symposium organized between the European Academy of Optometry and Optics together with the American Academy of Optometry and Optics, on Evolving Eye Care for Children: Current Perspectives on Vision Screening, Amblyopia Treatment, & Myopia Control.

Young researchers were given a platform to present their latest research papers, and 60 [poster presentations](#) were also featured. For many researchers, this was their first experience presenting at a European conference.

During the conference, the EAOO recognized and rewarded 6 individual members who have made a significant contribution to optometry and optics as part of the EAOO [Fellowship Programme](#): Marc Argilés Sans, Michael Baertschi, Mila Dragomirova, Peter Allen, Santiago Escandón-García, Timothy Wingert. The EAOO Fellowship is a mark of achievement to which all Academy members can aspire. Applications for the 2020 EAOO Fellowship Programme will open in summer of 2019.

Finally, ROME2019 marked a change in leadership within the EAOO, with Nicholas Rumney becoming President and Bernd Schwenson being elected as Vice-President. Eduardo Teixeira has become Immediate Past-President.

The ROME2019 meeting was organized with the [support](#) of platinum sponsors Essilor, Hoya, Luxottica and Mark’ennovy, as well as more than 30 conference exhibitors.

The next annual EAOO conference will be held on 15-16-17 May 2020 in Helsinki. More information will be announced on www.eaoo.info.

ABOUT EAOO

The European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO) is a membership organisation that provides a much needed voice to help advance optometry and optics, develop the scientific knowledge base and support and promote lifelong learning for optometrists, opticians, vision scientists and all those involved in eye health care across Europe. It was launched in May 2009, and has since built a strong network of eye care professionals across Europe. Together, we are working to harmonise standards and practices in optometry and optics.

For further information, please contact: Ana-Maria Nia, EAOO Manager at admin@eaoo.info.