

Eastern Regional Event

Menzies Cambridge Hotel & Golf Club, Wednesday 8 June 2011

Post-Event Report by delegate, Jay Patel

The eastern regional event, held at a Cambridge Golf Club, was the first event I have been to hosted by The College of Optometrists. As a member for 11 years I felt it was about time I took interest in our professional body and this seemed the opportune moment to start. Its convenient location allowed optometrists from a wide area to attend. I was pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the crowd, from newly qualified to the more established practitioners. It is clearly also a good time to network with colleagues whom you have not seen for a long time or who you may meet for the first time.

For this year's event The College of Optometrists invited two speakers Professor Bruce Evans and Professor Rupert Bourne.

Professor Bruce Evans spoke about Headaches: The role of the optometrist. He pointed out from the outset that the talk would be discussed from a clinical perspective rather than a scientific one, thus allowing us to use the tools to help headache sufferers and manage referrals appropriately. The talk discussed classification of headaches using the latest information from the International Headache Society and focussed on identifying 'typical' headaches so that it would be easier to recognise 'atypical' headaches and manage appropriately. It was useful to learn the characteristics of migraine, indeed it proved very useful as I was using Professor Evans' notes the next day in my own clinic for a new patient complaining of headaches. Using the migraine diagnostic toolkit I was able to confidently explain what the patient had and wrote a letter to the GP explaining my recommendations. This was certainly a worthwhile and entertaining talk.

Josephine Mullin, Director of Policy and Strategy at The College of Optometrists, briefly discussed Continuing Professional Development. Admittedly I did not know what CPD was until now. The talk explained the distinction between CET and CPD, and clarified that CET is a part of CPD. As professionals, CPD helps us to refresh and expand our skill base. This may be achieved by reading and attending meetings (CET) or (as I am) writing my first article! CPD would inevitably provide greater fulfilment in our roles. Visit www.college-optometrists.org/cpd for further information.

The talks were punctuated by a small coffee break allowing more networking time and discussion of Professor Evans' talk and CPD. This was clearly a more lively time, which is testament to Professor Evans' easy to understand speaking and the great tea/coffee and cake laid on by the College.

The next speaker was Professor Rupert Bourne on Angle Closure and Angle Closure Glaucoma in Europeans. Professor Bourne discussed the classification for angle closure glaucoma and refreshed our understanding of the anatomy/physiology of angle closure. Assessment of the angle is of utmost importance in angle closure and Professor Bourne briefly explained the various examination techniques. Interestingly with all the imaging technology available it is felt in Professor Bourne's opinion that gonioscopy still provides the best method for assessing the angle. The Van Herick method was also discussed. Here Professor Bourne explained using the traditional grading scales may not be appropriate as Grade 4 on one scale can mean the opposite on another scale, leading to obvious confusion. Instead, it has been recommended to record the percentage of angle seen relative to the corneal thickness on the temporal limbus only. By doing this an angle of less than 15% has a high sensitivity and specificity for detecting occludable angles than traditional grading techniques.

Overall the event was informative, entertaining, and I would highly recommend it!