

SEEING DOUBLE IN BRIGHTON, BOURNEMOUTH OR MANCHESTER?



It's political party conference time and whatever your party colour or location, you want to make sure you and yours, and the people you represent, see clearly for as long as possible. Orthoptics is a speciality which helps people to see better, go back to work and live quality, independent lives. Rowena McNamara and Anita McCallum from the British & Irish Orthoptic Society report.

What do we see in our crystal ball?

Between 2010 and 2020, it is predicted that there will be a 26% increase in Age-related Macular Degeneration, a 20% increase in patients diagnosed with glaucoma and a 25% increase in people with diabetic eye disease. At the same time, not enough medics are being trained to meet the needs of increasing eye clinic sizes and Orthoptists are poised to step up to the plate to meet demand at a lower cost.

What on earth is an "orthoptist" and how do they help you to party conference better?

Orthoptists are recognised as experts in assessing vision – e.g. in patients with learning difficulties or stroke. They take a lead role in ensuring that the national vision screening of 4-5 year olds is carried out. They work in hospitals, community clinics and schools across age ranges – including babies who need visual assessment to the elderly with macular degeneration. They can transform lives and prevent extended length of stays in hospitals: *"I was admitted to hospital with double vision and dizziness. I had prisms fitted to my glasses which enabled me to go home instead of staying another day in hospital."*

Picture shown from Amanda Berling, World Orthoptic Day, 2015 with the caption: "If you are seeing double – see an orthoptist!"

What can the profession offer patients?

"In the last 16 months I fell over so many times because I haven't been able to see kerbs, raised paving slabs, stairs. My glasses create single vision, but they have also allowed me to rebuild my life."
Satisfied customer from Kings College Hospital, Orthoptic Clinic.

Here comes the science bit...

Orthoptists work within eye care, with a special expertise in binocular vision. This is currently a hot topic, with 3D films being very popular. But what happens when binocular vision goes wrong? You may see double, be unable to read, be unsafe to drive. They diagnose the problem, alleviate symptoms and show you how to refocus double images back to single.

The message is...

Orthoptists: highly skilled, value for money, treating patients of all ages with binocular vision disorders.



British and Irish Orthoptic Society