

# Eye Conditions in Primary Care

## Introduction

A third of people who experienced an eye condition in the last five years approached their GP first – with another third choosing an alternative healthcare route other than opticians. The poll by Optometry Scotland stated that “Our latest data shows 1.35m GP appointments alone each year are used to treat common eye conditions relating to hay fever. And this is the tip of the iceberg.” Millions more appointments are used to deal with other eye health issues that optometrists on the high street are trained to manage<sup>1</sup>.

More people would turn to an opticians/optometrist practice for eye problems in the first instance (36 per cent)<sup>2</sup>, compared to other healthcare routes. It is important to acknowledge the role of the optometrist in diagnosis, using specialised equipment such as the slit lamp microscope and visual field screener. There are an increasing number of independent prescribing optometrists in the community in Scotland, and the new General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) specialist supplementary service<sup>3</sup> has been recently introduced, which supports management of more complex acute anterior eye conditions.

Management of common eye conditions can be appropriate in general practice, but knowledge of when to refer for specialised diagnosis is important for prompt assessment and management, as is advice on general eye care and hygiene.

## Module aims

**This module was developed following a discussion group in which PBSGL members explored their learning needs regarding managing eye conditions in general practice. They suggested the module covered the following areas:**

- Managing blepharitis in General Practice
- When to refer eye conditions to specialised services
- Diagnosing and Treating Herpes Zoster