



## THE THREE “O”S OF EYES

World Optometry Day is celebrated on March 23rd annually and although we all know how important our eyes are, we often tend to take them for granted. We rely on our eyes heavily during our daily lives, yet we often forget to schedule appointments to have them checked. But, who should you visit to have your eyes tested? Do you go to an optometrist, maybe an ophthalmologist? Wait a minute, should you go to the optician?

On World Optometry Day 2021, the Trinidad and Tobago Optometrists Association would like to discuss The Three O’s of Eyes and how they work together to take care of your eyes.

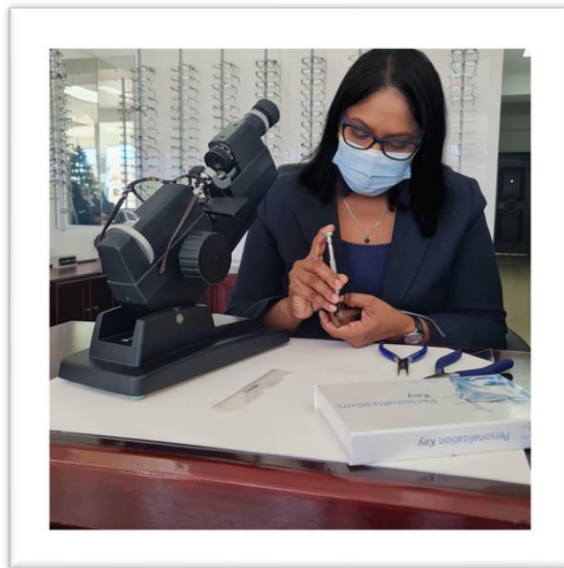
The three key players on the eyecare team are the Optician, the Optometrist and the Ophthalmologist. Who better than an optician, an optometrist and an ophthalmologist to tell us more about what they do and how they each contribute to patients’ eyecare?



## THE FIRST “O” OF EYES IS THE OPTICIAN.

Soomarie Singh, an optician and the President of the Opticians Association of Trinidad and Tobago, outlines the role of the Optician for us.

An Optician is a technically trained person qualified to design, fit and supply eyeglasses or contact lenses based on prescriptions from the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist.



*Optician and President of the Opticians Association of Trinidad & Tobago,  
Ms. Soomarie Singh ensures that a patient's spectacles are carefully adjusted.*



The Optician starts by analysing the prescription that is presented when the eye exam is completed. Lens design, material and features are selected based on the prescription as well as the patient's visual needs, occupation, lifestyle and hobbies among other things.

Frame selection or recommendation is also an important role of an Optician. Selections are made to ensure the best fit for the patient's facial features, proper fit of the lenses, functional needs and sometimes budget.

Although technically trained, Opticians also play an important role in the customer service aspect of a practice. Oftentimes, they sit with patients for however long it takes to determine the most appropriate choices before shipping off to the laboratory for the fitting of the lenses.

On return from the laboratory, the completed spectacles are inspected to ensure that the frame and lenses are made according to the prescribed specifications for the patient. The Optician is also there when the patient eagerly returns to collect the eyewear and ensures proper fit and care guidelines.

An Optician's role does not end there. For the life of the spectacles, the patient can return to adjust or perform repairs to the frame. These are among all the invaluable roles of an Optician in ensuring that sight is preserved and that the patient gets the best use out of the spectacles.



## THE SECOND “O” OF EYES IS THE OPTOMETRIST.

Mr. Nicholas Bhimsingh (BSc. Optometry- First Class Honors), an Executive Board Member of TTOA, is a practicing optometrist and shares with us the important role that optometrists play in the line of care to patients:

“Optometrists are the primary healthcare practitioners of the eye and visual system who provide comprehensive eye and vision care.

They can detect potential abnormalities in vision as well as the presence of ocular diseases or suspected pathologies.”

### HOW DO THEY HELP YOUR EYE HEALTH ?

Most commonly, eye examinations may result in prescribing corrective lenses in the form of contact lenses and/or glasses which will help a patient's vision.

If the examination indicates the presence of any eye diseases/ abnormalities or the Optometrist feels it would be beneficial to the patient to consult an Ophthalmologist or more appropriate Specialist, they will refer the patient for further investigation.

For example, your optometrist may be the first line of inquiry in detecting cataracts or evidence of diseases associated with failing eyesight. The earlier a condition is detected; the earlier appropriate treatment can be found.

When last have you tested your eyes?

*Book an appointment to see your Optometrist soon.*

*Look out for the TTOA Certified sticker*





*Optometrist & TTOA Executive Member, Mr. N. Bhimsingh uses Slit-lamp to check the health of the eye.*



*Optometrist, Mr. N. Bhimsingh checking unaided vision.*



*Optometrist using retinoscopy to determine the strength/prescription of your eyes.*



## THE LAST “O” OF EYES IS THE OPHTHALMOLOGIST.

Ophthalmologist, Dr. Robin Seemungal-Dass MB;BS, FRCS(ED), FRCOphth, gives us more insight as to what an ophthalmologist does.

Ophthalmologists are medical doctors who specialize in eye care. They undergo advanced medical training which allows them to detect, diagnose and treat all eye diseases. Treatment can range from prescribing spectacles and contact lenses to eye surgery.



*Ophthalmologist, Dr. Robin Seemungal-Dass in the Operating theater.*

Shared Care between Ophthalmologists, Optometrists and Opticians, allows for the management of patients with eye conditions, such as glaucoma, cataract and very recently, myopia in my practice. The benefits of Shared Care are numerous, most notable being the ability to provide a patient-centered approach with the support of a team of eye care professionals from various backgrounds, each with different skill sets and areas of expertise.



## SHARED CARE

Apologetically, the magnitude of a person's vision is often overlooked until it is jeopardized. Each of the three O's plays a critical role in providing patient care, to ensure that the patient receives the best possible eyecare. From detection, treatment and then technical measurements, each role is of vast importance as without one, patient care may be compromised. As we move into a more cybernated world with looming projections of health statistics, we must precondition ourselves to become advocates for a more shared-care system and work together, while keeping the patient at the heart of our duties. After all, we share the same goal; the best for our patients!