

**The Optometric Trends Discovery Group's
2023 Report on**

Presbyopia: INSIGHTS & TRENDS

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Optometrists play a crucial role in managing **presbyopia** by evaluating each patient's unique visual needs and prescribing a range of solutions, including the use of pharmaceutical presbyopia correcting drops (also referred to as presbyopia drops) that can temporarily relieve its symptoms.

We'll review data from the 2023 Optometric Trends Discovery Group (OTDG) Survey to shed light on the clinical practices and perspectives of optometrists across the United States, focusing specifically on their approach to managing presbyopia.

Uncovering Presbyopia in Our Patients

The first step in managing presbyopia is diagnosing it, but this can be a challenge. The respondents, on average, believed that 65% of 45-year-olds experience symptoms of presbyopia. However, it is noteworthy that there was no agreement among the respondents, indicating a wide range of estimates. This may be because age is not the only determining factor for presbyopia. Other factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, profession, frequency of eye examinations, sun exposure, and geographic location may also play a role in whether they develop symptoms, and their jobs/hobbies will affect whether they notice those changes.

Interestingly, as shown in Figure 1, none of the surveyed optometrists categorized the impact of presbyopia on quality of life as extremely

severe or negligible, suggesting that while many may experience its effects, the intensity of awareness varies significantly. This raises an important point by Dr. Cecelia Koetting about the precision of our diagnostic questions. While a patient may initially claim to have no problems with their phone's visibility, further investigation may uncover that they instinctively hold their phone at a greater distance, unknowingly compensating for presbyopia. Similarly, myopes, particularly low myopes, who remove their glasses for reading, may remain unaware of their early presbyopia as their existing habits already mask the symptoms. Some patients may be hesitant to acknowledge their visual changes, potentially due to a fear of aging or a reluctance to wear corrective eyewear.

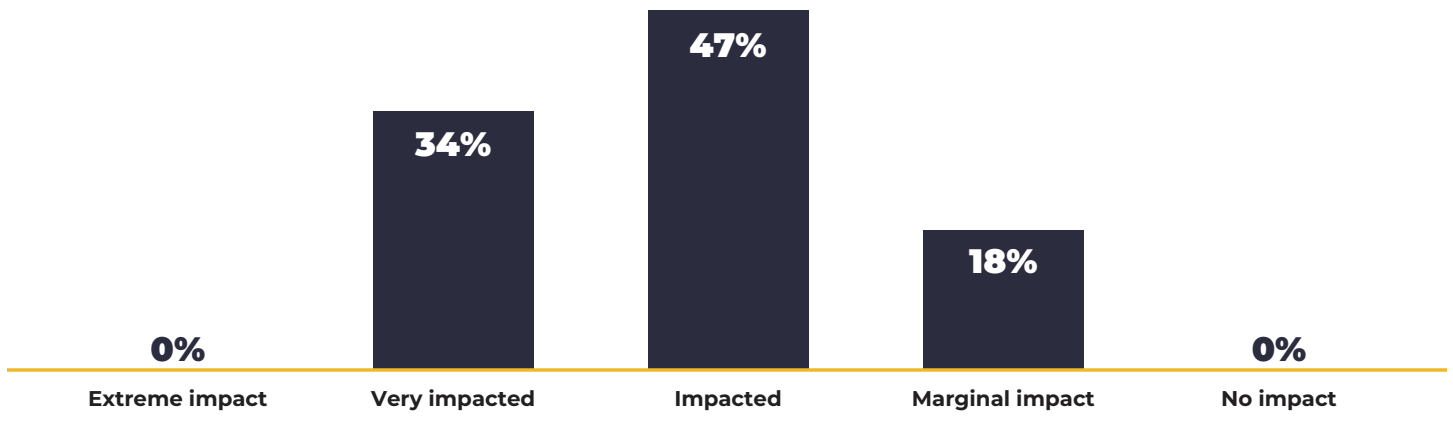


FIGURE 1. On average, how much do you believe uncorrected presbyopia (other than reading glasses) impacts a 50-year-old patient's quality of life?

“As Dr. Selina McGee notes, it’s important to emphasize that presbyopia treatment is not one-size-fits-all and that optometrists are not limited to a single solution.”

Adoption Rate of Presbyopia Drops

Given the prevalence and heterogenous presentation of presbyopia, a broad spectrum of treatment alternatives is available. When asked how likely respondents were to recommend different presbyopia treatment options in an otherwise normal presbyopic patient who wishes to be spectacle-free, pharmaceutical presbyopia correction and laser vision correction had the lowest proportion of respondents indicating it was likely or very likely (Figure 2).

As Dr. Selina McGee notes, it’s important to emphasize that presbyopia treatment is not one-size-fits-all and that optometrists are not limited to a single solution. For instance, one

might combine spectacles and contact lenses, or contact lenses with therapeutic drops, or even spectacle lenses with drops. Further along in their presbyopia journey, as they experience a significant loss of accommodation, a multifocal intraocular lens (IOL) might be the most suitable option.

Even with this in mind, the adoption rates of pharmaceutical presbyopia correction appear low. On average, respondents say that drops are prescribed in just 4.9% of their presbyopia patients, with 34% of respondents not prescribing drops at all.

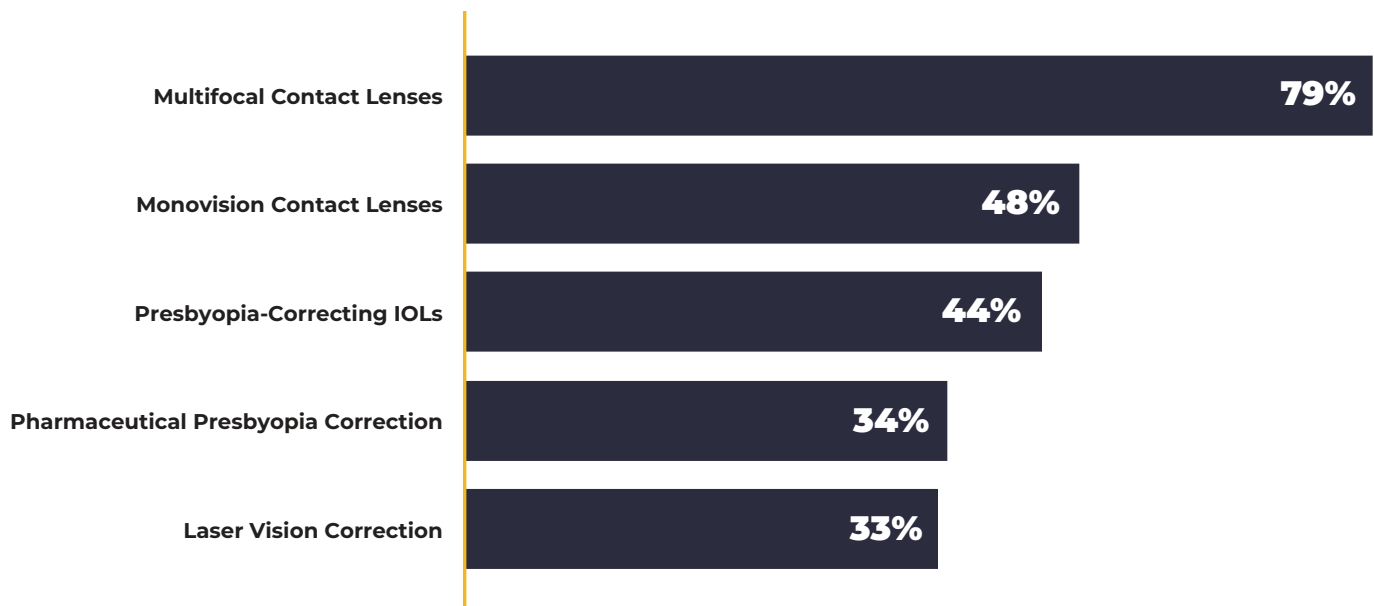


FIGURE 2. In an otherwise normal presbyopic patient, who wishes to be spectacle-free, how likely would you be to recommend the following options? (shown here, % responding very likely or likely)

Barriers to Adoption of Pharmaceutical Presbyopia Treatments

So why are optometrists not utilizing pharmaceutical presbyopia treatment more? As shown in Figure 3, the primary concerns highlighted were a) temporary side effects like eye redness and headaches, and b) the risk of more severe complications such as vitreous detachment, vitreomacular traction, retinal tears, and retinal detachment.

Dr. McGee suggests that these concerns might be overstated. She points out that, similar to the acclimatization period required for new progressive lenses or contact lenses, presbyopia treatments also necessitate a two-week adaptation phase. This phase is critical as it allows the brain to adapt to interpreting visual cues differently, despite initial blurriness. Patients need to allow their brains the time to adjust to these changes.

There have been post-trial reports of retinal detachment, underscoring the inherent risks that accompany any medical intervention, whether pharmacological or surgical. The key to managing these risks lies in ensuring patients are thoroughly informed about potential outcomes and meticulously documenting these discussions. Guaranteeing that a patient will never experience any complications is impossible. Nonetheless, thorough due diligence is conducted to select the right patients for treatment, with a particular focus on assessing retina health as a part of this evaluation. Not all patients are candidates for presbyopic drops. A thorough retinal exam should be performed on all patients prior to starting therapy.

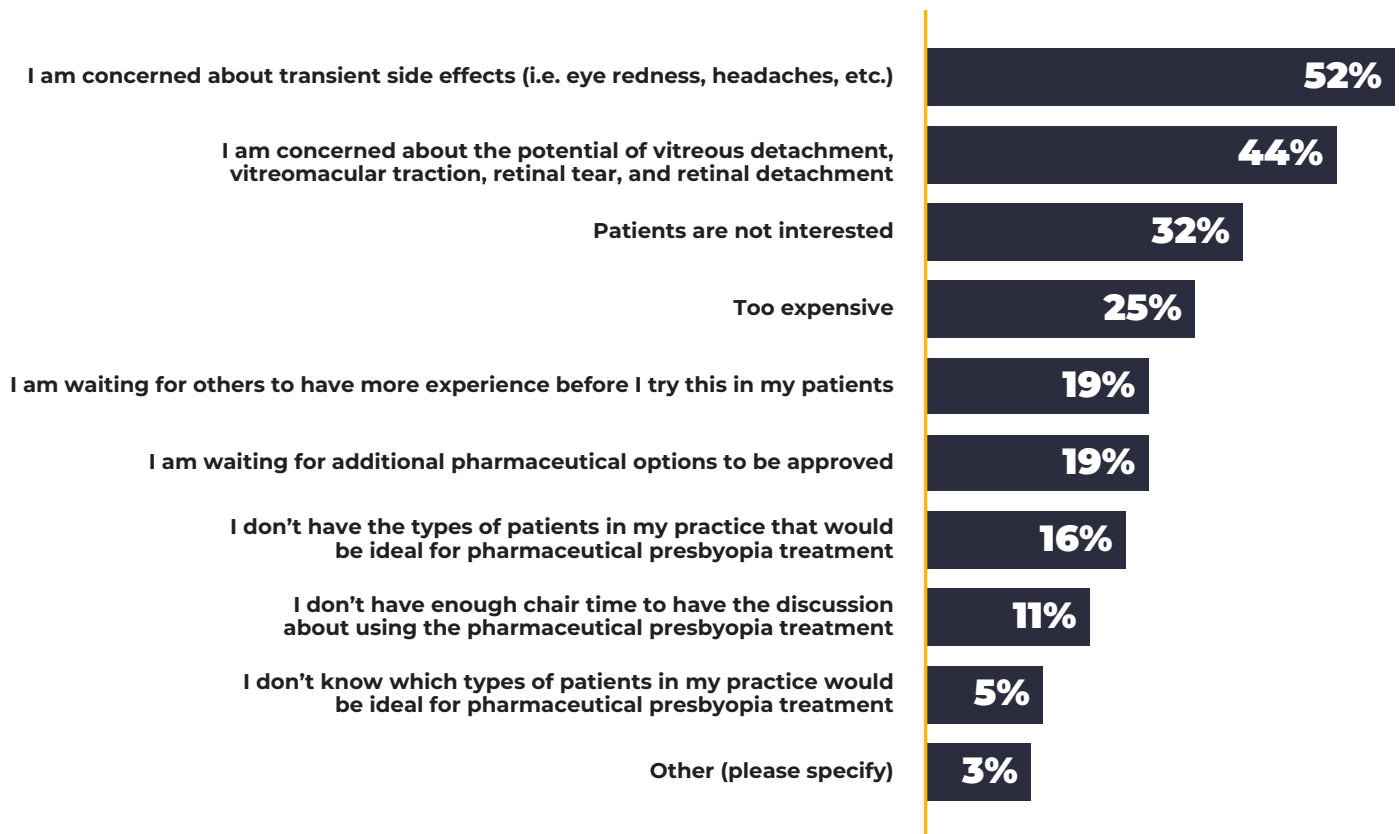


FIGURE 3. What are your primary reasons for not prescribing any/more pharmaceutical presbyopia treatments? (Select top 3)

Beyond specific concerns about presbyopia drops, a general lack of understanding could be a factor. Overall, 60% of respondents were confident or very confident in their understanding of pharmaceutical treatments for addressing presbyopia correction, but as shown in Figure 4, this was much lower in those who don't prescribe pharmaceutical options (36%) than those who do (71%). This suggests that enhancing education and familiarity with pharmaceutical approaches to presbyopia could influence their adoption rate among optometrists.

Dr. Koetting suggests these issues are interconnected, and they may be hesitant to prescribe pharmaceutical options because they are not confident in their knowledge about these options. Doubts persist about the drugs' effectiveness, their mechanisms of action, safety profiles, and particularly, the process of identifying ideal candidates for such treatments. These uncertainties contribute to the overarching challenge of accurately prescribing these medications to patients who would benefit most. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted

approach, focusing on enhancing optometrists' understanding and confidence through education and evidence-based guidelines, ensuring they are well-equipped to make informed decisions about presbyopia management.

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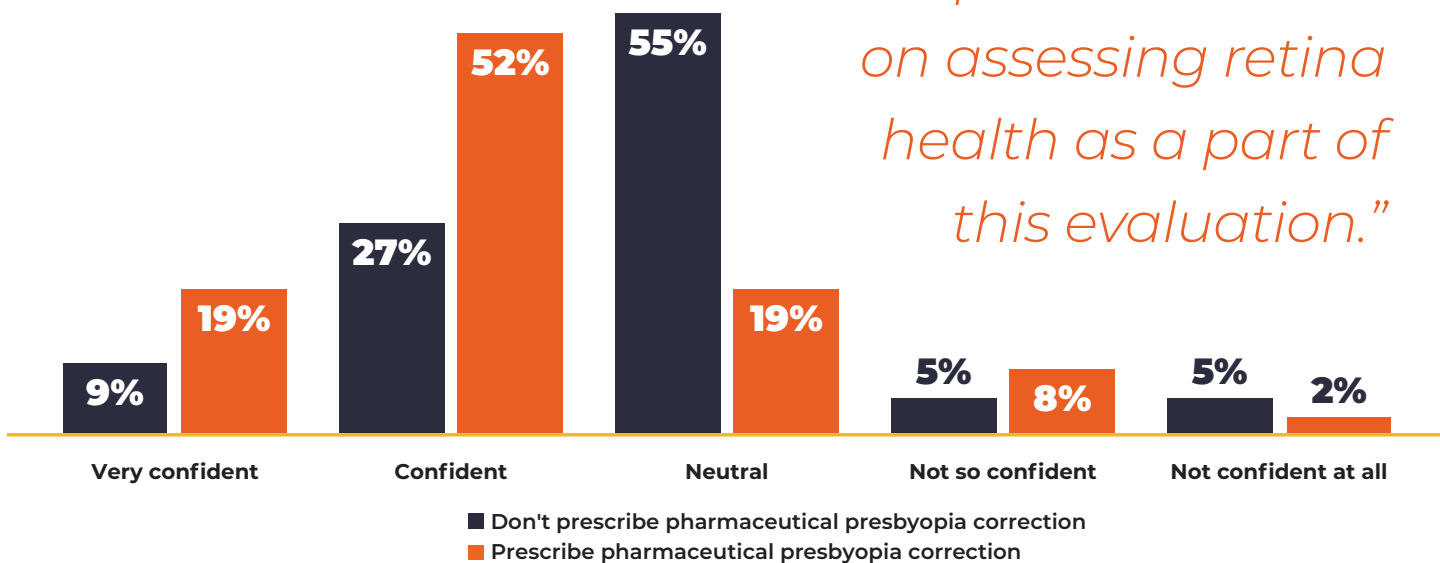


FIGURE 4. How confident are you in your understanding of pharmaceutical treatments for addressing presbyopia correction?

Did you KNOW?

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Respondents believed that
65%
of 45-year-olds experience
symptoms of presbyopia

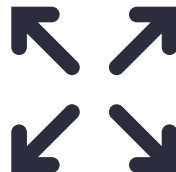


4.9%
of their presbyopia patients are
treated with presbyopia drops,
according to respondents

Top 3 factors to consider for presbyopia drops:



75%
Minimizing
adverse events



68%
Maximize duration
of effect



63%
limiting reduction
of distance and
night vision

The Optometric Trends Discovery Group



(OTDG) Survey was launched on February 4, 2023. The survey included 141 questions developed and reviewed with the OTDG leadership board. The survey questions explored doctors' understanding and current practice patterns across a number of areas of optometric care, including presbyopia, astigmatism, corneal therapeutics, ocular surface disease, glaucoma, lid management, corneal refractive surgery, dry AMD and geographic atrophy, and myopia management.

Nearly 300 optometrists responded to the survey which was closed in mid-March 2023. You can access interpretive reports on additional OTDG topics as they are released by visiting otdg.tfgeducation.com or scanning the QR code.



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Meet the Author

Dr. Cecelia Koetting
OD, FAAO, DipABO



Dr. Koetting practices at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in the Department of Ophthalmology in Denver, CO. Her primary focus is in anterior segment and ocular surface disease, neuro-optometry, and peri-operative care. She partakes in clinical research and has served Externship Director and adjunct faculty for several schools and colleges of optometry.

Dr. Koetting is a member of Intrepid, a fellow in the American Academy of Optometry, a diplomate of the American Board of Optometry, an active member of AOA and has served as both local and state officers within AOA. She was named young Optometrist of the year by the state of Virginia. Dr. Koetting lectures locally, nationally and internationally at conferences, continually contributes articles to and serves on editorial board for multiple publications.

Meet the Author

Dr. Selina McGee
OD, FAAO



Dr. McGee is the visionary founder of BeSpoke Vision, a boutique-style eyecare practice that specializes in dry eye disease, specialty contact lenses, and aesthetics.

She earned her OD degree from Northeastern State University College of Optometry, graduating Summa Cum Laude. She is the Past-President of OAOP. She currently serves as President for the Intrepid Eye Society, SECO Trustee, and a Board Member of the Oklahoma Board of Examiners.

She is an adjunct faculty member of Northeastern State University College of Optometry. She was named Young Optometrist of the year in 2012 by the OAOP. Recently, she was the recipient of the Theia Award for Business Visionary Insights 2022.