

The Patient Perspective of Pre-Appointing Annual Eye Examinations

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Introduction

- An annual eye exam is a proactive way to ensure ocular and systemic diseases are diagnosed early – when treatment is most effective.
- Among many factors that play a role in annual retention rates in eye care, procrastination has been found to be one of the most frequently identified barriers for eye care.³
- In this study, we discuss a practice called pre-appointing, where patients schedule their next annual exam at the conclusion of their current visit. Pre-appointing may prevent procrastination of scheduling annual eye exams.
- The goal for this study is to provide eye care practices with the patient perspective of pre-appointing; to specifically determine if patients feel pre-appointing is convenient and if it would improve their compliance with annual eye exams.

Methods

- A voluntary anonymous survey was circulated through social media postings via Facebook from December 8, 2020 to January 6, 2021.
- The survey was administered through Microsoft Forms.
- Questions asked included:
 - What is your age, gender, employment status, highest level of education?
 - Do you work in an optometry, dental, or other healthcare practice?
 - When was your last eye exam?
 - Have you encountered an optometry office that pre-appoints your next comprehensive eye exam?
 - Have you encountered other health care offices (i.e., dentist, physician, etc.) that pre-appoint?
 - Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is more convenient to schedule my future comprehensive eye exam during my current visit.
 - Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: I would be more likely to have an annual comprehensive eye exam if it was pre-appointed.
 - If your annual eye examination was scheduled one year in advance, how would you prefer to be reminded?
 - If your annual eye examination was scheduled a year in advance, when would you prefer to be reminded?
- Following the survey period, the responses were statistically analyzed to determine if there were significant relationships.

Results

- A total of 172 survey responses were collected and analyzed.
- There was no significant difference in the distribution of response ratings across the following groups: age, gender, education level, employment status, time since last eye exam, previous eye exam pre-appointment exposure, and those who reported working in the healthcare field.
- There was a strong positive correlation between individuals' perceptions that pre-appointment is more convenient and that pre-appointment would make them more likely to have an annual eye exam ($r_s = 0.678$, BCa CI [0.569, 0.776], $p < .001$).
- There was a statistically significant difference in response ratings when comparing individuals who had experienced pre-appointing in other health care settings to those who had not. Those with previous non-eyecare pre-appointment experience demonstrated higher levels of agreement with both statements ($U_{convenient} = 2424.00$, $n_{no} = 24$, $n_{yes} = 148$, $p = .003$; $U_{more\ likely} = 2377.500$, $n_{no} = 24$, $n_{yes} = 148$, $p = .005$).

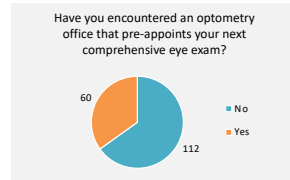


Figure 1: Question 7

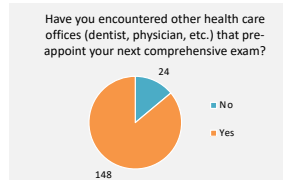


Figure 2: Question 8

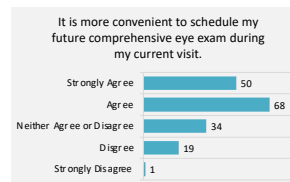


Figure 3: Question 9

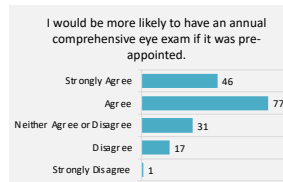


Figure 4: Question 10

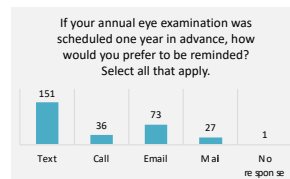


Figure 5: Question 11

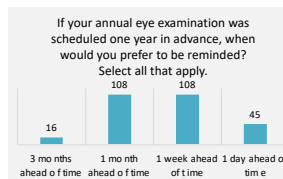


Figure 6: Question 12

Conclusions

- Patients with prior pre-appointment experiences at other healthcare offices may be more receptive to optometry offices pre-appointing their next comprehensive exam.
- Perceived convenience correlates to a patient's inclination to return for their annual eye exam when pre-appointed.
- In the study sample, the majority of respondents agreed that pre-appointing is more convenient and perceived pre-appointment as a process that would increase their compliance with annual eye exams.
- The majority of respondent's perceptions of pre-appointment were favorable and did not differ across age, gender, education, or employment status groups. These findings support greater utilization of eye exam pre-appointment across varied patient demographics.
- Respondents preferred text and email reminders 1 month and 1 week in advance of their pre-appointment examinations.

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