

# PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Introduction:** The COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound modifications in all the fields of ophthalmology practice in order to reduce the risk of infection transmission among the healthcare workers and patients. Since the ophthalmic examination and treatment techniques require close contact of the ophthalmologist and the patient, the risk of exposure to the infection remains the main challenge during the period of pandemic.

**Aim/Purpose:** To present how our outpatient clinic adjusted the routine ophthalmology practice to the local government restrictions and protocols/guidelines provided by the international ophthalmology organizations.

**Methods:** At the beginning of the pandemic the country was put into the lockdown to prevent the spread of the infection and consequently, our clinic was shut down temporarily. During this period ophthalmologists successfully adopted means of telemedicine providing consultations to the patients via photo or video interactions. Later when lockdown measures were lifted, we realized that in order to sustain our practice we have to implement all the infection measures such as use of personal protective equipment (PPE), environmental and administrative control.

**Results:** Due to introduction of the mandatory requirements for the social distancing and disinfection procedures our clinic experienced the decrease in the schedule volume as well as in the number of elective surgeries. Although, economic burden is present, we realize that application of safety protocols in healthcare practices is of vital importance. We are actively working on integrating the telemedicine into our routine practice.

**Conclusion:** As the number of COVID-19 cases is dramatically increasing globally and the epidemiological situation is still unpredictable, we are aware that all the protocols are temporary and recommendations are constantly updated. Although, various protocols and guidelines are suggested, maintaining the balance between saving the vision and improving safety measures is our top priority.