

Most eye practices seeing urgent cases during COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—Most practices are complying with the American

Academy of Ophthalmology guidelines for scheduling patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Aug. 5 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Matthew R. Starr, M.D., from the Wills Eye Hospital at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, and colleagues surveyed 40 randomly selected private practices and 20 university centers from four regions across the country to assess [practice patterns](#) for common ocular complaints during the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses to three [clinical scenarios](#) (refraction request, cataract evaluation, and symptoms of a posterior vitreous detachment) were compared.

The researchers found that 5 percent of private practices were closed, 60 percent were only seeing urgent patients, and 35 percent remained open to all patients; the corresponding numbers for university centers were 10, 85, and 5 percent. Telemedicine measures were similar across practice types. Compared with private practices, university centers were more likely to mention preparations to limit the spread of COVID-19 (85 versus 35 percent). Next available appointments for cataract evaluations were obtained faster for private practice versus university centers (mean time to visit of 22.1 versus 75.5 days). Similarly, private practices were more likely to be available to see [patients](#) with flashes and floaters (75 versus 40 percent).

"As there has not been a study examining these practice patterns before the COVID-19 [pandemic](#), the relevance of these findings on [public health](#) is yet to be determined," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

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