



The Eye as a Gateway to our Body and Soul – Can We Separate Business and Healing in Medicine?

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Editorial

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Editorial

Our Eye-Just a Sensory Organ?

For sure, the eye is one of the most fascinating organs of our body. It offers insights into overall health but it allows us to perceive the world in all its diversity and splendor of color as well.

Keywords

Eye; Ophthalmology; Chronic Diseases

Abbreviations

AMD: Age Related Macular Degeneration; AI: Artificial Intelligence.

Introduction

We often recognise systemic diseases first in the eyes, later they manifest themselves in our body, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases for example or neurological disorders.

I would like to raise two questions in my Editorial:

- Do we care about the important unit of body & eye and body & soul in our modern medicine?
- Healing and economic pressure, two sides of the coin?

Eye Diseases - Early Warning for Our Body!

Ophthalmic diseases often indicate deeper systemic health issues. Examples:

- Diabetic retinopathy: Vascular damage often appears earlier in the eyes than in the rest of the body.

- Glaucoma, one of my main research subjects and often limited to high eye pressure, is linked to metabolic processes and circulatory problems. We found, that glaucoma is influenced by systemic factors such as oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunction and chronic inflammatory processes. This highlights the importance of a more holistic approach. Just lowering intraocular eye pressure does not address the variety of causes of this disease.
- AMD (Age Related Macular Degeneration) is closely associated with cardiovascular problems.

So the eye is not just a sensitive organ - it is an important connection to our whole body.

Modern ophthalmology must therefore be holistically, interdisciplinary and comprehensive.

Is There a Contradiction Between Holistic Thinking and High End Specialisation?

The connection between ophthalmology, biochemistry, internal medicine, psychology, endocrinology and neurology is most significant for ophthalmologists.

We should be a kind of "criminalists", searching for reasons and the complex medical history behind patients eyes symptoms, especially metabolic health plays an important role in eye health.

The same crucial factors that we know from Anti-aging Medicine, such as healthy nutrition, micronutrients application (for example Resveratrol), physical activity, enough sleep, stress management like meditation, just all, that improves the health of our mitochondria, directly



influences our body and so the health of our eyes.

And you know why?

Oxidative stress is a leading factor of many diseases.

“If the mitochondria are healthy - our body is healthy“ (Professor Huber Vienna) and so our eyes. But highly specialized surgical expertise and scientific innovation remain as essential as holistic approaches based on biochemistry, general pathology in connection with eastern medicine (Ayurveda). Modern Ophthalmology demands both, understanding of systemic interactions and high performance medicine that is integrating cutting edge surgical procedures for best possible postoperative outcomes and our modern ophthalmology with advanced laser techniques, minimally invasive surgeries shouldn't block the view of integrating scientific advances without forgetting the bigger picture behind it. Holistic thinking combined with specialised precision medicine including AI is the solution and what our patients are looking for.

Healing and Business in Medicine - Two Sides of the Medal!

Business is measured by profit, the healthcare sector is not an exception.

But the medicine has a greater responsibility, priority is wellbeing of our patients!

- Hospitals and clinics must be solvent from a financial point of view and provide high quality in care.
- We are limited because of our ethical commitment. Healing and improving lives is our focus and should be our ultimate priority, not the profit.

Aging Population and Chronic Diseases - Prevention is the Magic Word!

We are reaching an older age today, this is demographic reality. But it is reality as well that we become chronically ill. What is the reason?

- We discussed it in part 1 of the Editorial already, we often neglect the fundamental principles of health, holistic diagnostics and treatments, prevention and healthy lifestyle.
- We often treat the symptoms and don't always have an eye on the causes.
- Most important - we need to educate our patients to prevent diseases, we need to teach them about lifestyle changes.
- People need to be encouraged to take responsibility for

their own health!

- But unfortunately we are raising the cost of our healthcare system worldwide because we are not going to think outside the box.
- Patients need our helping hand and motivation to make better health choices.
- Without prevention we do not get a healthier society.“ We need a foundation of youth “.

Limits of Artificial Intelligence, AI is Not an Universal Solution!

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is integrated into our work since centuries, assisting in diagnostics, image analysis and administrative processes.

- AI is promoted globally – not just because it is a lucrative industry but also because it is seen as a help in healthcare, today especially because of labour shortages.
- But AI cannot replace human empathy, emotional intelligence, experience, judgment and also not 100% of specific surgical skills.
- AI can analyze but can not look into a patient's eye.
- AI cannot understand patients fears, concerns and can not stroking the back of a patient or finding a comforting word at the right moment.
- AI cannot assess all the dimensions of illnesses, emotional, social and especially not individual.
- For this reason physicians, humane and warm hearted, will always be essential. Technology can only support us!

About Ethical Self-Reflection - Do We Always Recommend the Best Treatment Option for the Patient?

- Am I truly recommending the best treatment for my patient or the one, that generates the highest financial income?
- Not only in ophthalmology, with high-tech procedures such as different laser treatments, surgical implants, premium intraocular lenses, this ethical consideration is really relevant.
- We need to be more honest to ourselves and to our patients and transparent.
- Ophthalmology is innovative and a high-tech field but ethical integrity must remain.

Conclusion: Balance Between Economics in Business and Humanity?

- The future of our medicine, especially ophthalmology, demands a more balanced combination between high income businesses with increasing role of AI and human empathy.

- We should never forget, we doctors have a calling!
- Only when we achieve the balance between sustainable business and humanity we can create a healthcare system that cares about progress and about people.
- Our success should not be measured by how many procedures we perform - but by how many lives we

improve.

“The best medicine combines knowledge, innovation and humanity, true success is not measured in profit but in the trust and wellbeing of our patients. “
(Dr. Sylvia Paulig)