

CASE STUDY

May 2023

OptiClear IPL supports Newbury DED response

In February 2023 Dr Valarie Jerome, the owner of Valarie Jerome Optometrists in Newbury, started using OptiClear Intense Pulse Light (IPL). The latest pioneering technology for patients with dry eye disease (DED).

The independent and privately-owned optometrists, located on Northbrook Street, is one of the first optometrists in the country to invest in the OptiClear IPL machine.

OptiClear IPL uses light energy to rejuvenate Meibomian glands; ultimately unblocking the glands and relieving the debilitating symptoms. It can also improve the outcomes of other vision issues, including ocular surface disease and rosacea.

Championing the very latest technology and treatments for DED, Valarie who suffers from dry eye and can relate to her patients, plans to dedicate one day a week for a Dry Eye Clinic where she meets and assesses patients with dry eye symptoms. She aims to treat four patients a week with IPL.

Since February, Dr Valarie Jerome has treated five dry eye patients with a **success rate** so far **of 100%**. A course of four treatments is provided, with patients **noticing less irritation and scratchiness of the eyes after the first treatment**.

In the last three months, approximately 30% to 33% of Dr Jerome's patients suffered with Dry Eye.

"I want to be at the forefront of the latest treatments available, offering patients cutting-edge technology and treatments. I would encourage other optometrists to do the same and offer more procedures like IPL and avoid the burnout of routine eye exams."

DR VALARIE JEROME

Founder Valarie Jerome Optometrists



Just four treatments are required, and it is suitable for patients up to age 80+.

PATIENT CARE



I would recommend optometrists only invest in IPL if they are passionate about eyecare and passionate about dry eye treatments. Many optometrists are employed by multiples where quantity is the name of the game. IPL and dry eye care takes more time and dedication to each patient than the assembly line high street opticians offer.

DR VALARIE JEROME

Founder Valarie Jerome Optometrists





TECHNOLOGICAL INVESTMENT

"I see IPL as an investment in my practice and a real benefit to my patients. It is not just a niche. It is a way to help people suffering with dry eyes, people who have been ignored for years, people who will be so grateful for their optometrist helping them to have eyes that feel better, look better and see better."

As an independent and privately-owned optometrist, Dr Valarie Jerome, who has experience both in the UK and the US, leads the way and positions herself as a specialist in dry eye care, which is a common condition that has a significant impact on the quality of life due to its many debilitating symptoms.

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The biggest challenge that Dr Valarie Jerome faces is lack of knowledge; people do not know that this treatment exists, so they suffer in silence. Marketing is going to be key in raising patient awareness and seeking treatment.

"Following some recent PR in the local media I picked up several new clients who read the article on OptiClear IPL and its benefits to those suffering with DED. Three of these new clients have now been assessed and are underway with treatment, which is fantastic yet highlights the importance of marketing IPL."

Dr Valarie Jerome is confident her investment in IPL will be rewarding, both in terms of practice profitability and patient satisfaction. In fact, many of her new clients are patients at other opticians but are booking appointments with her as they see her as more of a specialist optometrist.

"I want to be at the forefront of the latest treatments available, offering patients cutting-edge technology and treatments, and I would encourage other optometrists to do the same and offer more procedures like IPL and avoid the burnout of routine eye exams. Optometrists deserve to expand their minds and enhance their practice to its full potential – and our patients need us to do this as well."

FILL THE TREATMENT GAP

"I see the future of optometry a bit differently from most optometrists as I think about it on global scale having practiced in both the US and in the UK. I think its time for optometrists to step up and fill in the gap left by long delays to ophthalmology."

"I think in the US optometry will move quite quickly to more dry eye awareness and treatments, and although I see it happening in the UK too, I think it will be much slower in comparison. People are not used to 'paying' for healthcare generally and with free eye tests and low cost glasses, optometrists are not the first port of call when people need help with their eyes – opticians, GPs and even pharmacies come first."

Fellow optometrist, researcher and dry eye specialist, Dr Trusit Dave, adds: "When discussing Dry Eye, its prevalence and how wide a problem it is, is a good place to start."

"For those over 60, two in five suffer with DED, and due to changing environments and increased screen time, more and more children (aged eight and nine upwards) are starting to show symptoms too."

"Dry Eye can be uncomfortable and debilitating, similar to chronic arthritis, yet it remains under diagnosed. More awareness of DED and highlighting its symptoms is key. Being recommended to a specialist who is able to offer a full-scope service to diagnose, treat and monitor will result in more effective treatment outcomes."

"There is a real opportunity for independent optometrists to grow their practices. In today's changing landscape, successful optometrists identify symptoms of dry eye during standard eye examinations then recommend a more in-depth dry eye consultation resulting in accurate diagnosis of the type of dry eye and an individualised treatment plan."

"Most patients experience an improvement in symptoms and clinicians will see a reduction in ocular surface disease. If implemented correctly, specialising in managing dry eye addresses a huge unmet need offering greater satisfaction as well as increased growth for the practice."

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