## In Response

# In Response to “Review of Standardized Testing in Doctoral Health Professions Admission Requirements”

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The role that standardized exams should play in optometry program admissions is a timely and important topic, and Ooley et al. (2021) are to be commended for their comprehensive review of usage of such exams by doctoral-level health professions programs. Their paper, “Review of Standardized Testing in Doctoral Health Professions Admission Requirements,” was published in the Fall 2021 edition of *Optometric Education*.[1] Of the 11 professions (not including optometry) included in their survey, only graduates of medical (allopathic and osteopathic), dental and podiatry programs are licensed to both diagnose and medically treat disease in humans. Data included in the paper indicate that all the educational programs for these professions require the completion of standardized exams for admission.

Optometrists, like the professionals cited above, are licensed in all states to independently diagnose disease in humans and prescribe medications for treatment. Moreover, in at least five states, optometrists may be licensed to perform certain laser procedures, and at least nine states permit minor surgery. When looking for peer professions that may serve as models for optometry school admissions requirements, an important consideration should be whether the profession is granted the responsibility to diagnose and medically treat disease in humans. As is evident in the list of professions listed in the authors’ paper, most doctoral-level healthcare professions do not have this scope of practice and, consequently, these professions do not serve as appropriate peers for this type of analysis.

While Ooley et al. (2021) point out that pharmacists may provide injections and independently dispense contraceptives in certain states, these professionals are not licensed to diagnose and medically treat disease. It is of note that applications to pharmacy programs have plummeted in recent years.[2] The extent to which this is a factor in the absence of a requirement for standardized admissions exams is not clear.

In a companion paper in the Fall 2021 issue of *Optometric Education*, the predictive utility of standardized admissions exams is discussed, particularly with respect to the lack of published papers for optometry.[3] This is an important issue that deserves more attention. Analysis regarding the continued usage of standardized admissions exams in optometry should, nonetheless, focus on comparisons with professions that have been granted comparable professional responsibilities ? namely medicine, dentistry and podiatry, which all currently require completion of standardized exams for admission to their programs. Elimination of such a requirement at this time would make optometry an outlier when compared to these peer professions.

### References

1. Ooley C, Jakirlic N, Hoppe E. Review of standardized testing in doctoral health professions admission requirements. Optometric Education. 2021 Fall;47(1).
2. Cain J, Campbell T, Congdon HB, et al. Pharmacy student debt and return on investment of a pharmacy education. Am J Pharm Educ. 2014 Feb 12;78(1):5.

3. Jakirlic N, Ooley C, Hoppe E. Standardized tests as predictors of success in health professions education: a scoping review. Optometric Education. 2021 Fall;47(1).

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