

The status of optometry in Italy

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DOI:

[10.5384/sjovs.v15i1.155](https://doi.org/10.5384/sjovs.v15i1.155)

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Recchioni, A 2022, 'The status of optometry in Italy', *Scandinavian Journal of Optometry and Visual Science*, vol. 15, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.5384/sjovs.v15i1.155>

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Optometry status in Italy: current views

Following a previous Editorial published in *Scandinavian Journal of Optometry and Visual Science* in July 2020 where the Italian Optometric Society (SOPTI) and The Norwegian Association of Optometry (NOF) decided to join to support SJOVS to further and faster development of the field of optometry in Europe, we asked to Anto Rossetti, O.D., teacher at Istituto Statale of Pordenone and Associate Professor at the University of Padua to share the current views of the status of Italian Optometry:

"In Italy, both opticians and optometrists are classified by the National Institute of Statistics (Istat) as "health technical professions" where the latter (always also licensed opticians) may be considered "specialised opticians" that offer all services opticians can offer and some additional ones. While opticians are basically regulated by an old law (dated 1928) that qualifies them to work independently with "simple defects of myopia and presbyopia", optometrists are not, but their practice is legal and generally accepted. They must have completed an education in optometry to become qualified optometrists (e.g., previously a regional qualification similar to level EQF 5 [European Qualifications Framework], or currently through a university program to EQF 6). Currently, no "single practice act" exists for opticians and optometrists, instead a complex of acts (both specific and general) defines the professional practice. An inter-association committee (TiOpto) has recently summarised (2021) typical services delivered by optometrists in addition to the well-established ones of supplying spectacles, contact lenses, and optical devices, and educating wearers and users, such as measurement of any refractive error, custom-made contact lenses, visual training, some examinations of ocular health (like non-contact tonometry, visual field testing, etc). As a system, opticians and optometrists can provide a wide range of ser-

vices, even if some improvement in the laws remains necessary."

During the last annual National Conference of the Italian Optometric Association (SOPTI) (Bologna, 29–30 May 2022) entitled *"Technical procedures for good clinical practice in optometry"*, the message sounded very clear: only by considering interdisciplinarity and working together with other eye care professionals and by applying good evidence-based clinical practice, can Italian optometry grow and progress further in Europe. The abstracts from the accepted posters are presented in this issue of SJOVS.

In this issue you can read about the requirement for further research to understand and tackle the problem of dry eye in Sweden. Using an online survey, Roth *et. al.* provide insight into the problem of dry eye symptoms in Sweden. The findings of the study confirm that dry eye symptoms are common among the Swedish population.

Additionally, we announce SJOVS' second special topic. We encourage optometrists, researchers, and related professionals to submit their work to be considered for publication in standard issues of SJOVS over a two-year period. If accepted, manuscripts will be included in the online collection of the given special topic. The second special topic is going to be: OCT imaging, in particular automatic segmentation of choroidal thickness and ocular blood flow measurements in both healthy and diseased eyes. The special topic editorial on optical coherence tomography is authored by Scientific Advisory Board member and guest editor Prof. Christine Wildsoet and editorial board member Karthikeyan Baskaran.

On behalf of SJOVS, we wish you all a safe and peaceful summer.

Editorial Board Member Alberto Recchioni

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