
YOUR DIAGNOSIS AND THE INTERNET • BY TONI BRISTOL

Have you searched the internet to see what information your patients will find when they try to locate their diagnosis? You need to expect that your patients will check the internet to research everything they can about their condition. So it is important to ensure that their diagnosis will be “verified” online.

It is not surprising to see that some of the diagnostic terms you are using will get more results than others. For example, convergence insufficiency gets a wealth of information which supports the efficacy of vision therapy. However, as of this writing, visual perceptual, visual processing, or visual information processing disorder will give you a mix of websites that deal with learning disability and occupational therapy. They include occupational therapy treatment options as well as accommodations for these disorders. There are also a few optometric references, but they pale in comparison.

Other vision terms which you may not realize are also used to describe learning disabilities are visual motor dysfunction, disorder, or deficits, as

well as visual-motor integration. The Learning Disabilities Association of America describes the symptoms of a visual perceptual/visual motor deficit very well; however, their solution is to provide parents and teachers with strategies to deal with these and says nothing about a vision examination in that section of their site.

For example, when you tell a parent that their child has a visual motor dysfunction, don't be surprised if the school decides to put this child in an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) to help the child with accommodations. In this situation, the parent may decide to wait to see what the school will do before they pursue treatment in your office.

Therefore, you need to make sure you are using the proper language in discussing the diagnosis with your patients so they don't get confused. I recommend you review the Practice Management section of the Members' Only section of COVD's website, specifically the section, “Fact Sheets.” This section contains a series of fact sheets which describe conditions of the visual system amenable to

treatment with vision therapy and cite their signs, symptoms, diagnostic factors, therapeutic management considerations, prescribed treatment regimens, duration of treatment, and follow-up care. This information was compiled by the COVD Clinical Standards Committee. These fact sheets are extremely helpful as handouts for patients, insurance companies, etc.

While I have focused on the diagnosis here, I do need to point out that once you have explained the vision problem you want to be sure the patient understands the connection between their symptoms and the actual vision problem. This step is vital to ensure the patient actually goes through your vision therapy program.

If you have any trouble locating the Fact Sheets, please contact the COVD International office at: info@covd.org. They are always more than happy to assist!

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NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR REGIONAL DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

The position of Regional Director-At-Large is up for election in 2010. Kara Heying, OD, FCOVD, was appointed in April 2009 to fill the vacated slot. The term expires this October at the 40th Annual Meeting. Please note that Dr. Heying has agreed to run for the position. As per our Constitution, Article IV, Election of Officers, Section 3a, “No Director may succeed themselves in office except for those designated to initial terms of less than three (3) years.” Since Dr. Heying's initial term was less than three years, she is eligible to run for this position.

This will serve as official notice requesting members to submit nominations for the Regional Director-At-Large position. The Regional Director-At-Large represents all COVD members and serves a three-year term on the Board of Directors. Regional Directors play an important role in helping to develop and guide COVD programs and policies. Directors must attend two Board meetings per year and participate in Board discussion and activities by email and telephone between meetings.

Individuals nominated must be COVD Fellows who live within the

region they represent. Any COVD member may submit a nomination, including a self-nomination. If you know a COVD Fellow who would be interested in contributing to the continued growth of COVD, encourage them to seek election to the Board of Directors.

Nominations should be sent to the COVD office at info@covd.org or by phoning 330-995-0718.

Deadline for submission of nominations is April 16, 2010.