

CRST

Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today



JANUARY 2020

VOL. 20, NO. 1 | CRSTODAY.COM

Experience 2020



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and patient
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Surgiorithm: Personalizing Recommendations and Increasing the Efficiency and Productivity of Cataract Evaluations

BY TERRENCE J. DOHERTY, MD; AND JAMES C. LODEN, MD

Today's cataract surgery patients vary greatly in age, activity level, and desire for spectacle-free vision, and cataract surgeons have increasingly more options to offer them. Matching a patient's desired experience and visual outcome with the latest technology while appropriately managing their expectations is something that cataract surgeons must master if they want to deliver a premium experience.

But in their efforts to understand patients' visual needs, surgeons can find themselves bogged down in lengthy conversations with talkative patients. The resulting longer chair times can create delays in the flow of clinic. A frustrated surgeon who becomes impatient can have the tendency to shorten a conversation by advising the patient not to consider any premium options. On the other hand, a poorly informed or confused patient is not likely to consider any additional out-of-pocket investment for a premium product. Some may even reconsider having cataract surgery altogether.

A BETTER FORM OF PATIENT EDUCATION

Patient education software offered by Surgiorithm can be a great way to solve these dilemmas. It allows your

practice to invite patients to complete an at-home preparation session via a secure email link or an abbreviated phone survey.

The software uses a series of simple questions and statements to analyze patients' visual needs and lifestyle preferences. During the preparation session, the software also assesses patients' level of perfectionism and their willingness to consider additional out-of-pocket costs. Afterward, patients have the

option to click on links that play informative videos or that direct them to your practice's website, where they can learn more about their surgeon and get information about other areas such as financing options. The entire process is customizable.

The second major benefit of Surgiorithm is the feedback loop it provides to the surgeon. Information from the at-home preparation session is presented on a printable online dashboard that includes color-coded

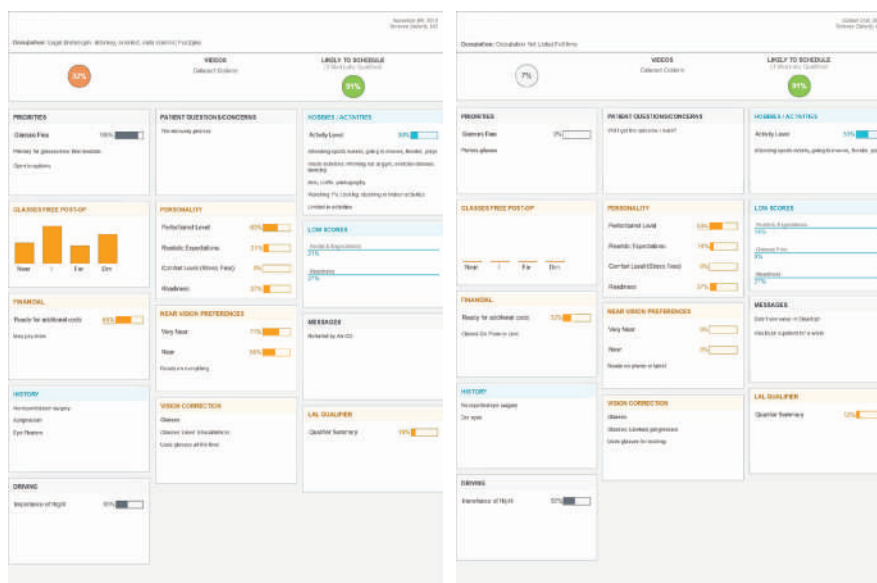


Figure 8. Surgiorithm's insight printouts of two patients' response items. The patient on the left indicated a high interest in spectacle-free vision and readiness to consider additional costs. The patient on the right does not seem to mind wearing spectacles and does not want to incur additional costs. Helpful information about personality, hobbies, and visual preferences is also displayed on the printouts.

Courtesy of Terrence J. Doherty, MD

bar graphs and percentages (Figure 8). The categories are separated into individual boxes that can be arranged in any order and include things such as the patient's priorities, financial situation, hobbies, and vision preferences. The Surgiorithm software can also notify the surgeon to which patients clicked on the financing link; we have found this information to be very helpful.

Lastly, Surgiorithm also helps the practice keep track of the number of patients who book surgery and how many of them upgraded when given a premium recommendation. This can help the practice to measure and improve its revenue from premium options.

ADDING A PERSONAL TOUCH

Armed with this information, we feel that we can greet our patients in a personalized way, knowing more about their backgrounds and having an idea of how likely a given patient is to choose a premium product. This makes our evaluations much more efficient and productive. It also just feels more personal to be able to ask a patient, "Would you like to be able to cycle and snow ski without having to wear

glasses?" or, "I see that you like photography; do you have to wear your glasses for editing?"

In our practice, we begin each patient conversation by thanking the patient for taking the time to fill out the Surgiorithm information ahead of his or her appointment, and we try our best to make the patient feel that it was worth the time he or she spent completing it.

Using this software has improved our interactions with patients, and it helped to make many patients more likely to consider an upgraded option. ■

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