

Moving Optometry forward to accept the changing approach to myopia from correcting refractive error only to looking at myopia as a disease entity: World Council of Optometry's role

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Introduction/Purpose

The mission of the World Council of Optometry (WCO) is to facilitate the development of optometry around the world and support eyecare professionals (ECPs) in promoting ocular health and vision care as a human right through advocacy, education, policy development and humanitarian outreach. In the past decade, the emergence of myopia has been seen as a growing public health epidemic.¹

The expansion of research on myopia as a disease entity demonstrates that myopia can lead to vision threatening conditions.² Improved techniques and methods to monitor myopia progression have been documented and clinically useful, evidence-based interventions to help delay the onset of, and slow the progression of myopia are becoming increasingly available.³⁻⁵ For these reasons WCO is working to actively advocate for updated and expanded diagnosis and treatment of childhood myopia.

Methods

WCO teamed with CooperVision, Inc. (CVI), a leader in the field of vision care, to spread the message of myopia as a disease entity and the knowledge, skills and tools to manage myopia based on quality scientific research.

The WCO released the recommendations within a resolution titled "Standard of Care for Myopia Management by Optometrists" (2021).⁶ The purpose of the resolution was to shift the profession of optometry from the concept of simply correcting myopia to understanding how to mitigate, measure and manage the disease and provide patients with the most up to date and evidence-based advice and treatment recommendations.

A global committee representing both WCO & CVI reviewed evidence on the myopia epidemic. Some of the issues highlighted were:

- For years, myopia has been considered a simple refractive error, addressed with corrective optical devices
- Evidence shows that myopia is complex, including the possibility of ocular health complications not seen until years after myopia develops²
- Many studies have outlined risk factors, protective behaviors, and management that may impact the onset and progression and therefore the long-term effects of myopia³⁻⁵

Results

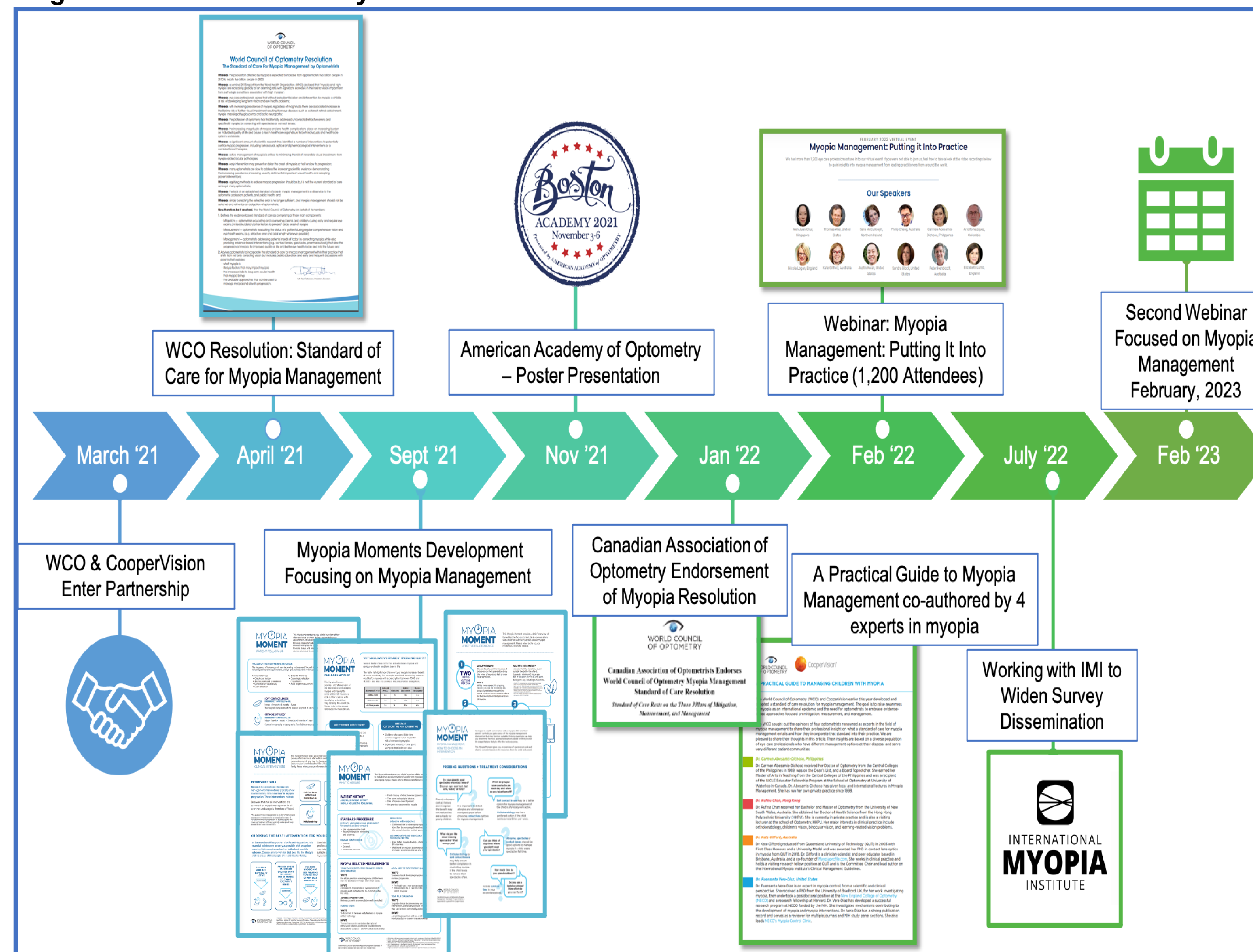
As stated WCO board approved & signed the 'Resolution for the Standard of Care for Myopia Management', on April 13th 2021. From there, a cascade of activity followed built on the foundations of the 3 main components of the Standard of Care:

Mitigation: Optometrists educating and counseling parents and children, during early and regular eye examinations, on lifestyle and other factors to prevent or delay the onset of myopia.

Measurement: Optometrists evaluating the status of a patient during regular comprehensive vision and eye health examinations, such as measuring refractive error and axial length whenever possible.

Management: Optometrists addressing patients' needs of today by correcting myopia, while also simultaneously prescribing evidence-based interventions (e.g., contact lenses, spectacles, pharmaceuticals) that slow the progression of myopia, for improved quality of life and better eye health today and into the future.

Figure 1: Timeline of activity ^{6,7} (all resources available at the WCO website)



Conclusion

Many ECPs do not have the time to search myopia management research that is rapidly changing.

The partnership between the WCO and CVI is helping to drive providing evidence-based science that ECP's need to best serve their young, myopic patients through virtual presentations, published articles and a website with documents that provide succinct guidance to mitigate, measure and manage their myopic patients with current interventions.

WCO is a global optometric organization committed to help ECP's stay abreast of the best evidence-based research in order for the optometric practice to provide quality, affordable and equitable care for their patients and remain committed to working towards making myopia management a standard of care.

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