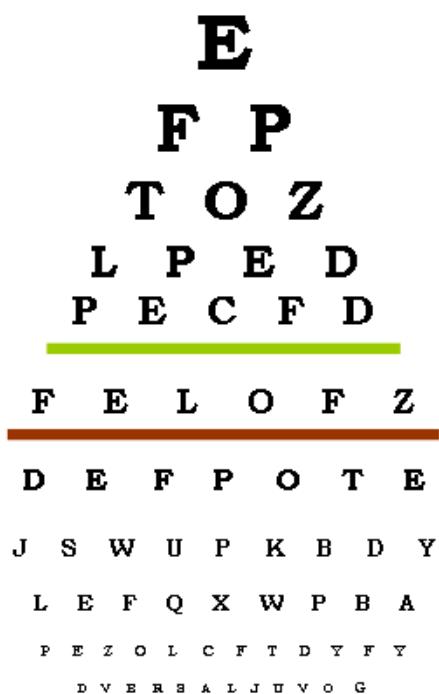


2008

Annual Report



OPTOMETRISTS AND OPTICIANS BOARD

Optometrists and Opticians Board

Annual Report 2008

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

2008 was indeed an important year for the optometrists and opticians.

The passing of the Optometrists and Opticians Act in 2007 and its commencement on 22 February 2008 meant that all practising optometrists and opticians are now required to be registered with the Optometrists and Opticians Board. This also means higher standards for the primary eye care provision as registration comes with requirements that the practitioner is trained to deliver optometry and opticianry services, and is of good character. This has led to more training and upgrading courses being offered.

To stay relevant and upskill themselves, opticians who were grandfathered into the registers could choose to take upgrading courses in either Singapore Polytechnic or Republic Polytechnic. New courses like the Diploma in Optometry in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, and the Certificate in Dispensing Opticianry (CDO) course in MDIS were developed to meet the new requirements.

The Board also started a voluntary continuing professional education (CPE) programme in October 2008. By taking part in enriching continuing education activities, we hope that practitioners would keep learning and improving their skills. As a profession, our priority would be to serve the public to the best of our abilities. It is thus important to stay up-to-date with the best practices in

the industry worldwide in order to provide our customers with quality services, and contribute to better eye care for Singaporeans.

I would like to thank all optometrists and opticians for being patient with the changes taking place in the industry. With the public's interest in mind, let us all play a part in increasing the professional standard of primary eye care.

Dr Khoo Chong Yew
Chairman
Optometrists and Opticians Board

INTRODUCTION

The Optometrists & Opticians Act was passed in Parliament in July 2007 to regulate the practice of Optometry and Opticianry in Singapore. The purpose of regulation is to ensure that those who provide eye care services are properly trained and qualified. The Act establishes the Optometrists and Opticians Board (the "Board") to regulate Optometrists and Opticians.

All Optometrists and Opticians providing eye care services will need to be registered with the Optometrists & Opticians Board to continue practising or to start working as an optician or optometrist from 1 Jan 2008.

As at 31 December 2008, there is a total of 2165 registered Opticians and Optometrists.

OPTOMETRISTS AND OPTICIANS BOARD MEMBERS

Position	Name	Designation
Chairman	Dr Khoo Chong Yew	Ophthalmologist Raffles Eye Centre
Registrar	Dr Harold Tan	Acting Director (Regulatory Compliance) Ministry of Health
Members	A/Prof Lim Tock Han	Ophthalmologist Department of Ophthalmology Tan Tock Seng Hospital
	Dr Yvonne Ling	Ophthalmologist Singapore National Eye Centre
	Dr Wilfred Tang	Head Singapore Polytechnic Optometry Centre
	Mr Roland J Izaac	Optometrist Philip D Izaac Pte Ltd
	Ms Jacqueline Tay	Optometrist Singapore National Eye Centre
	Mrs Hardip Singh	Senior Quality Assessor School Appraisal Branch Schools Division Ministry of Education
	Mr Steve Lim	President Singapore Opticianry Practitioners
	Mr Peter Koh	Optician (CLP) The Lens Men and The Eye Site
	Mr Anthony Tay	Optometrist Ray Optics Pte Ltd
Lay Member	Mr Chandra Mohan K Nair	Advocate & Solicitor of Supreme Court of S'pore

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Registration of Optometrists & Opticians

After the Optometrists & Opticians Act was passed in Parliament in July 2007, registration of the optometrists and opticians under the grandfathering provisions started from 1 September 2007.

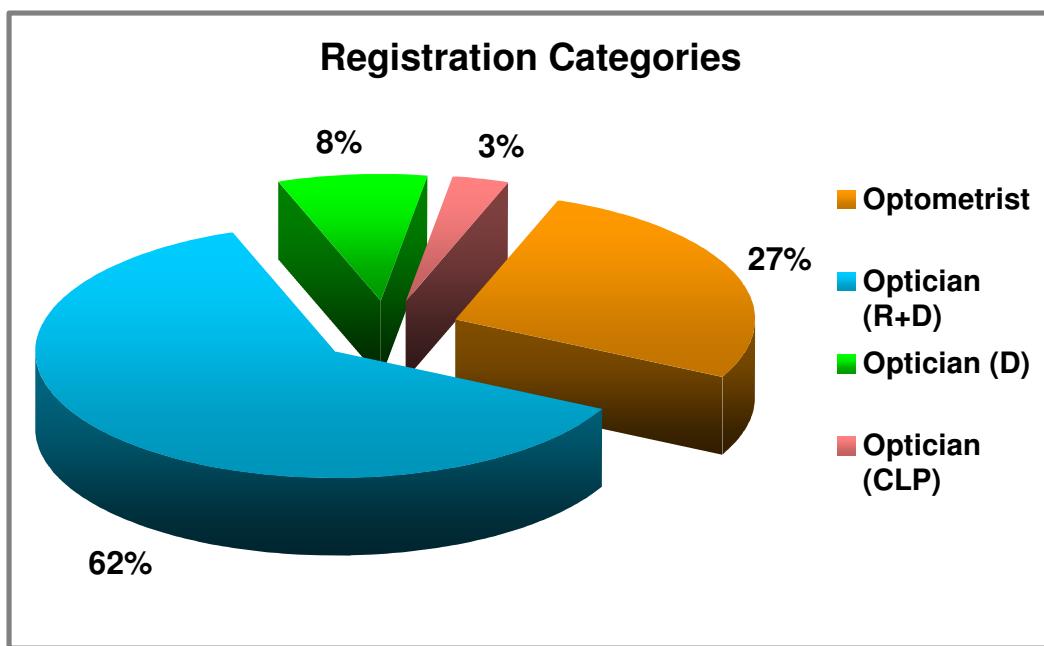
The grandfathering provisions allowed experienced optometrists and opticians without approved qualifications to be conditionally registered with the Board. These optometrists or opticians would then complete competency tests or upgrading courses to convert to full registration. A total number of 565 contact lens practitioners registered with the Contact Lens Practitioners Board were also granted full registration as optometrists, or opticians with contact lens practice privileges.

At the end of the grandfathering period on 31 July 2008, there were a total of 1490 conditionally registered opticians (dispensing and refraction) and conditionally registered opticians (dispensing).

By 31 December 2008, 78.90% of the conditionally registered opticians had completed the requisite competency tests at Singapore Polytechnic, and 3.80% registered opticians completed the upgrading courses at Singapore Polytechnic and Republic Polytechnic.

By the end of 2008, the Board registered a total of 2165 opticians and optometrists (Chart 1). Among the registrants, 27% were optometrists, 62% were opticians (R+D), 8% were opticians (D) and 3% were opticians (CLP).

Chart 1: Number of registrants in each registration category



Please see Appendix I for a more detailed profile of registrants.

Continuing Professional Education

Continuing Professional Education (CPE) consists of educational activities that serve to maintain, develop or increase the knowledge, skills and professional performance of optometrists and opticians.

All optometrists and opticians are strongly encouraged to engage in Continuing Professional Education to ensure that they maintain high standards of practice and keep abreast of new developments in their respective fields. This will allow the profession to always provide quality and up-to-date eye-care services to the public, thereby safeguarding the public's interest.

The Board implemented a voluntary CPE programme to help you better prepare yourself for compulsory CPE in future. The programme will run from 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009. The voluntary CPE programme requires practitioners to record their learning activities in a Continuous Professional Education Log, and submit the Logbook to the Board. Practitioners will be awarded a Certificate of Commendation if they complete and submit the CPE log by 31 October 2009, and satisfy the criteria for CPE in their registration category (Tables 1 and 2). The Certificate of Commendation provides assurance to the practitioners' customers and colleagues of their commitment to professional development, and their professionalism as optometrists or opticians.

Table 1: Number of CPE credits required for each registration category

Registration Category	Minimum Credits per year
Optometrist	25
Optician (CLP - Contact Lens Practitioner)	20
Optician (D+R - Dispensing and Refraction)	12
Optician (D - Dispensing)	12

Table 2: Summary of Activity Categories

<u>Activity Category</u>	Description of Activity
1A	Short Activities (1 to 2 hours) - eg. Lecture/Workshop/Tutorial by approved providers
1B	Long Activities (>2 to 8 hours per day/ whole day event) – eg. Conference/Seminar/Workshop by approved providers
2	Publications related to optometry or opticianry
3	Reading – eg. Articles/Practice guidelines/Video or audio tapes
4	Formal Certification Course

COMPLAINTS

Online sale of contact lens

Several cases of complaints against bloggers selling contact lens online via their blogs were surfaced to the Board.

In all such instances, advisory letters were emailed to the bloggers informing them that only registered optometrists and opticians (contact lens practitioners) are currently allowed to prescribe and dispense contact lenses under the Optometrists and Opticians Act, and that it is an offence to supply contact lens if they are not registered with the Board. The bloggers were also instructed to stop the sale of contact lenses online with immediate effect. Cases where the online sale of contact lenses persisted were then referred to the Enforcement Branch in the Ministry of Health for further investigation and prosecution if warranted.

The penalty for such offences is a fine not exceeding \$25,000, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both, for the first conviction. In the case of a second or subsequent conviction, the penalty is a fine not exceeding \$50,000, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 month, or both.

False Declaration of Information for Registration

An Optician (Dispensing and Refraction) was found to have forged a testimonial from his previous company. He also falsely claimed to have more than 5 years of experience in order to be eligible for competency test.

This case was referred to the Ministry of Health for investigation. The optician admitted to the offence and was convicted in court. He was fined \$1000, and is currently under inquiry by the Board for disciplinary action.

APPENDIX I:

1. Profiles of Optometrists

Chart 1(a) – Number of optometrists by registration type

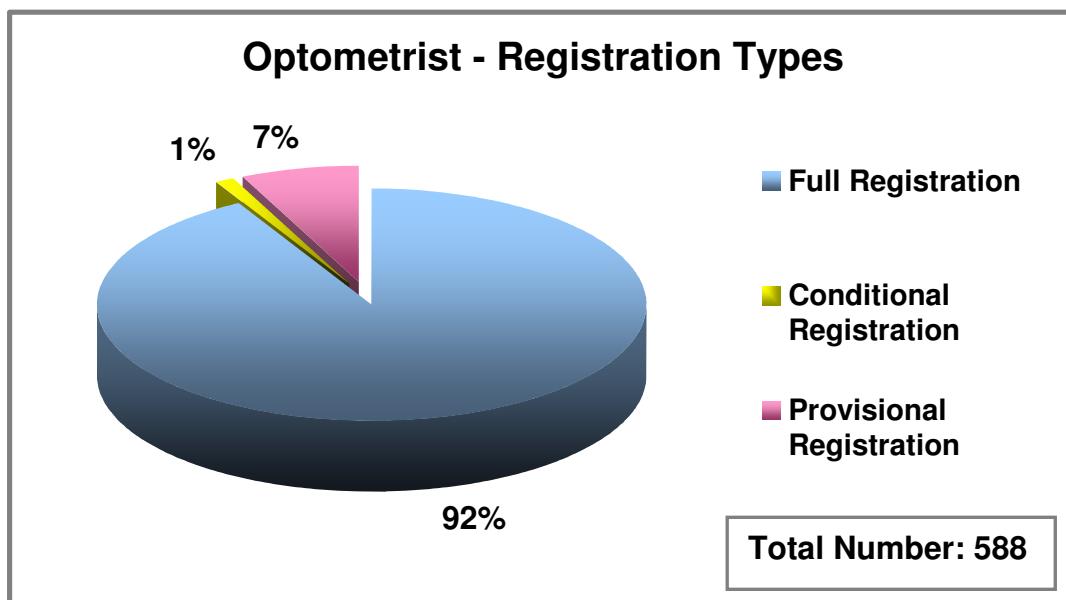


Chart 1(b) – Number of optometrists by age group

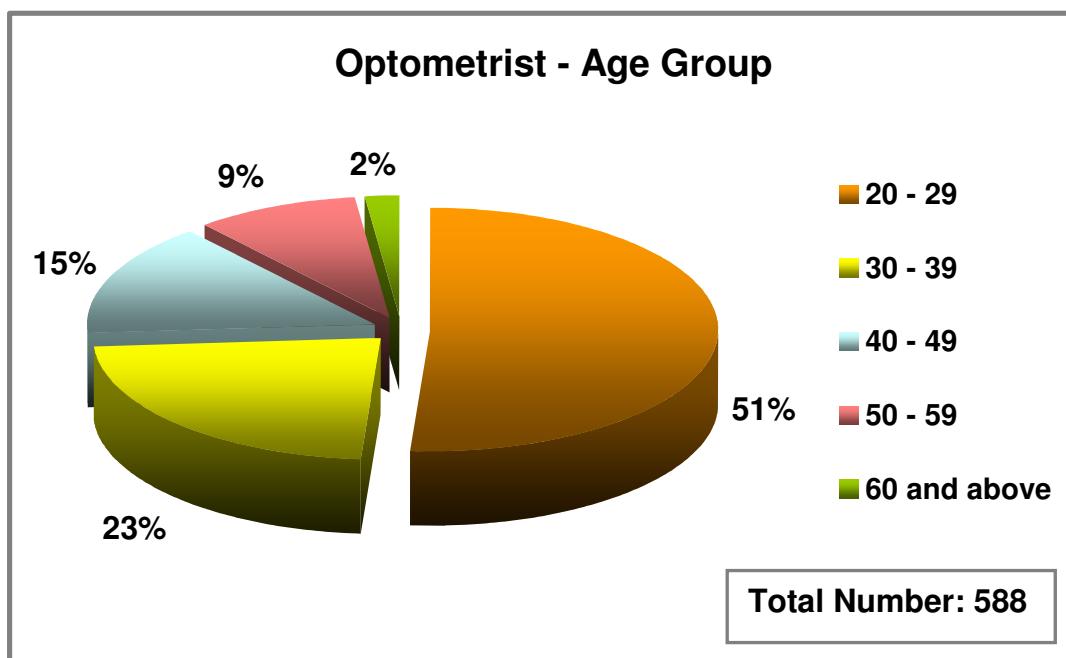


Chart 1(c) – Number of optometrists by nationality

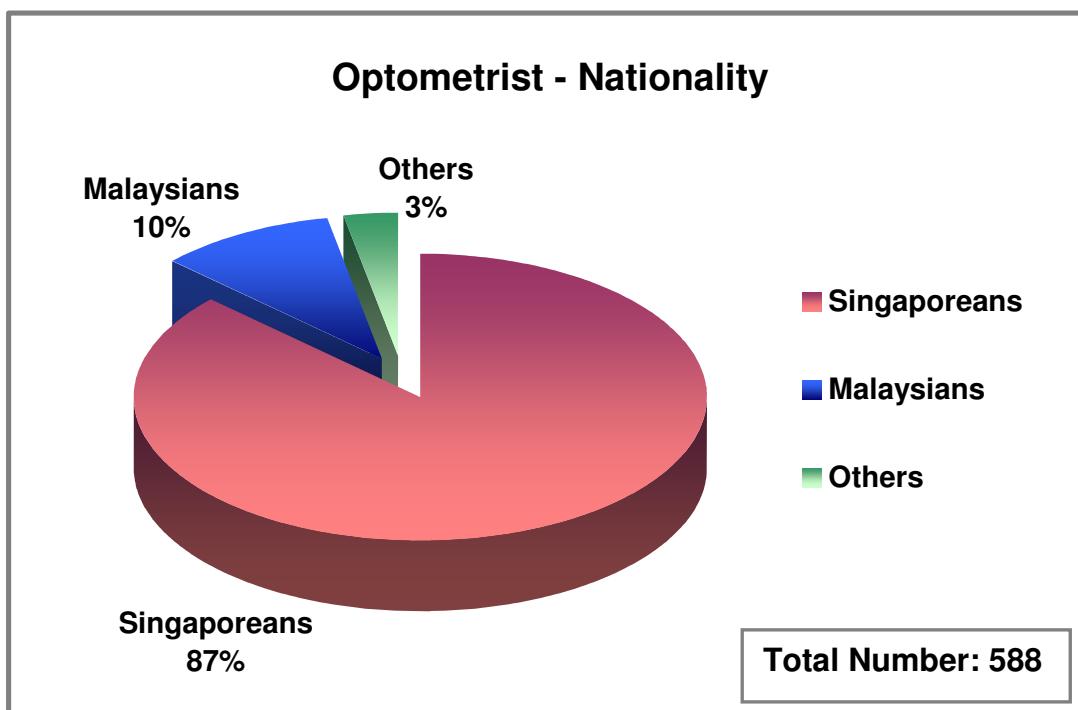
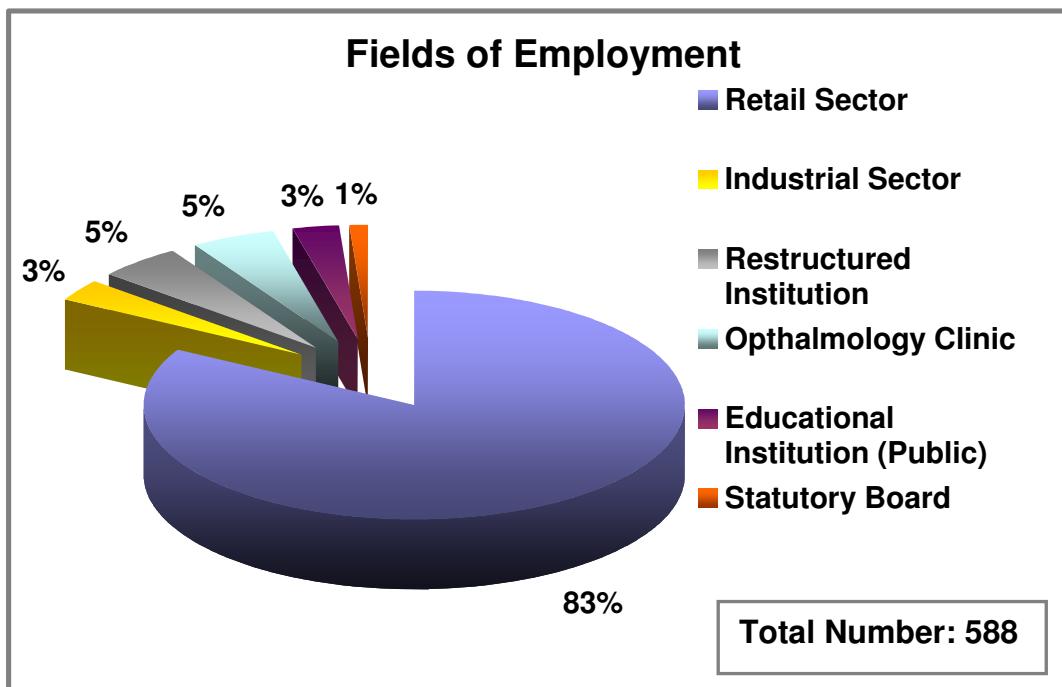


Chart 1(d) – Number of optometrists by fields of employment



2. Profiles of Opticians (Dispensing & Refraction)

Chart 2(a) – Number of opticians (R+D) by registration type

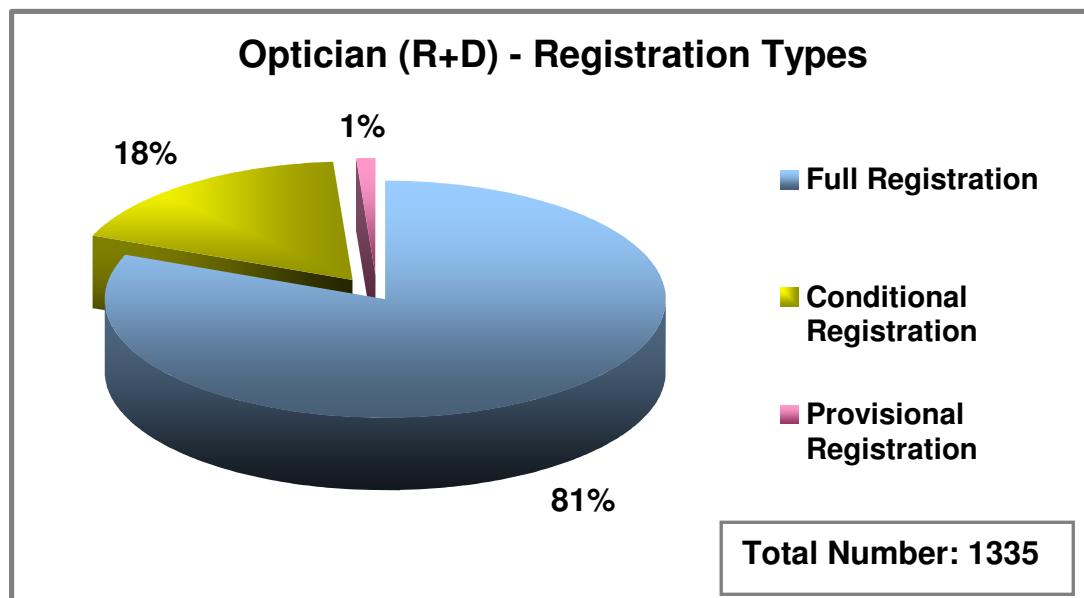


Chart 2(b) – Number of opticians (R+D) by age group

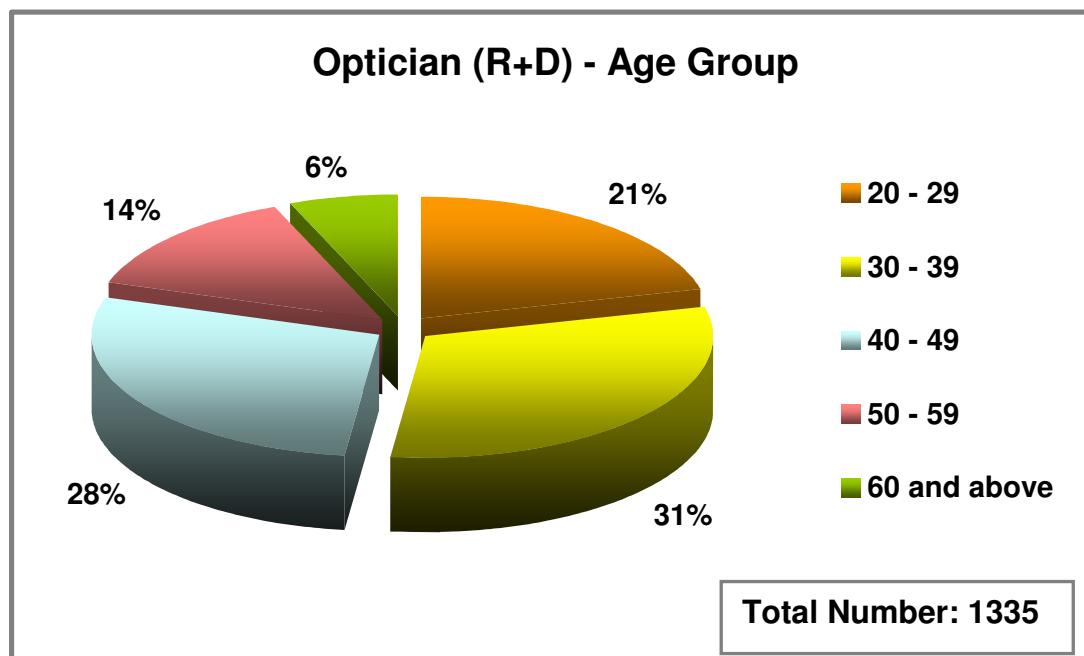


Chart 2(c) – Number of opticians (R+D) by nationality

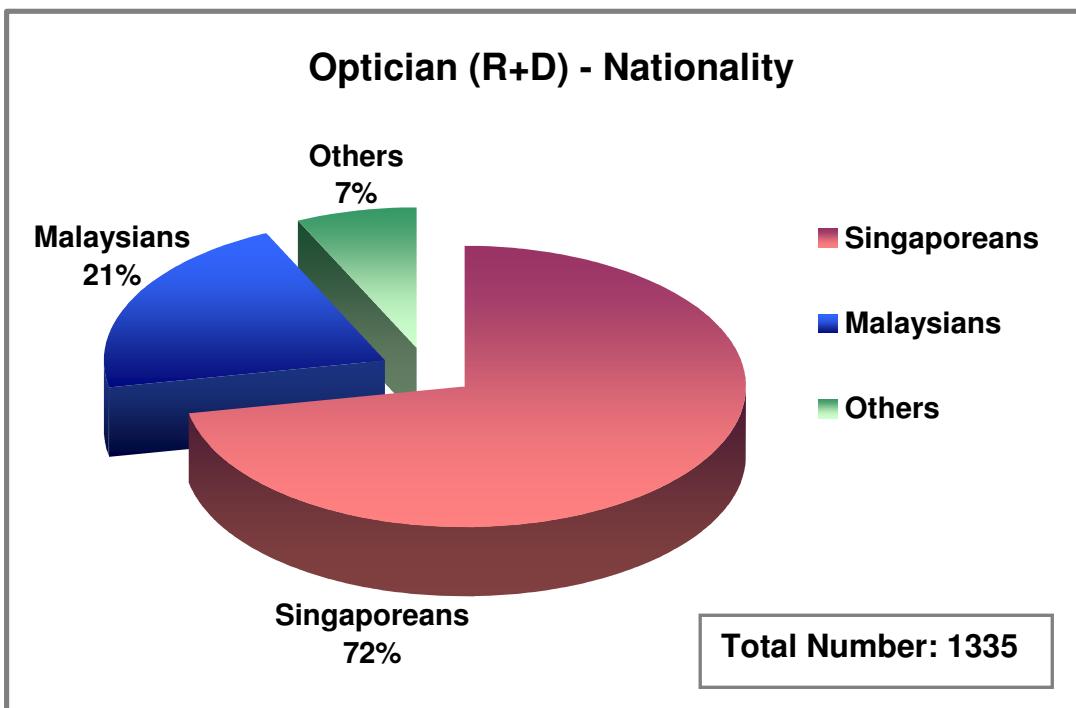
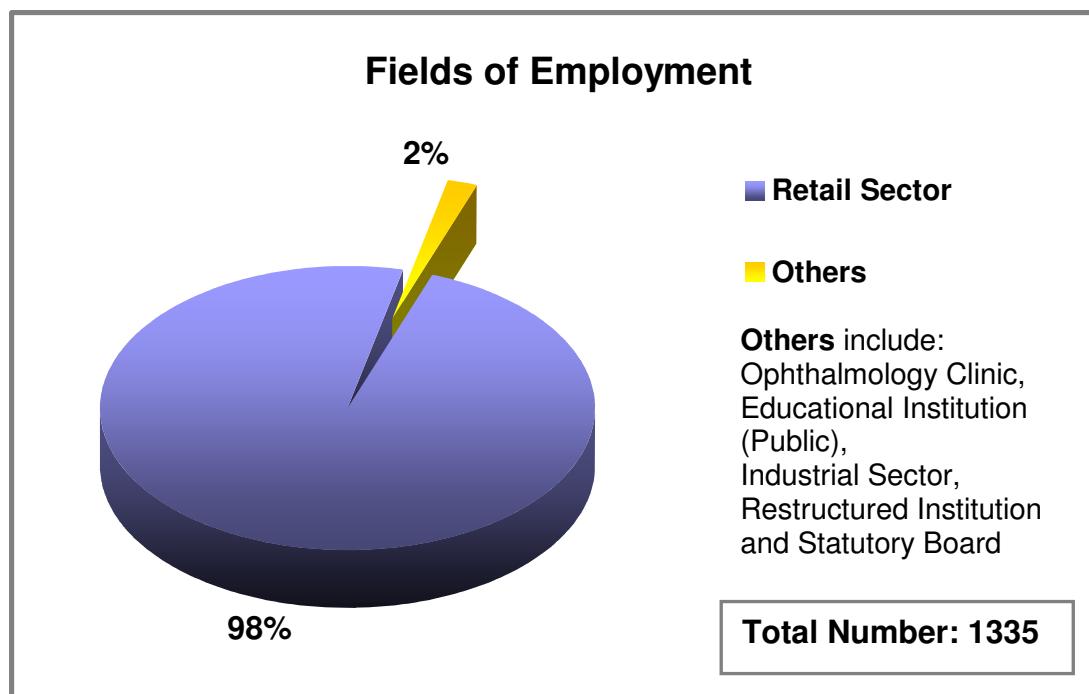


Chart 2(d) – Number of opticians (R+D) by fields of employment



3. Profiles of Opticians (Dispensing)

Chart 3(a) – Number of opticians (D) by registration type

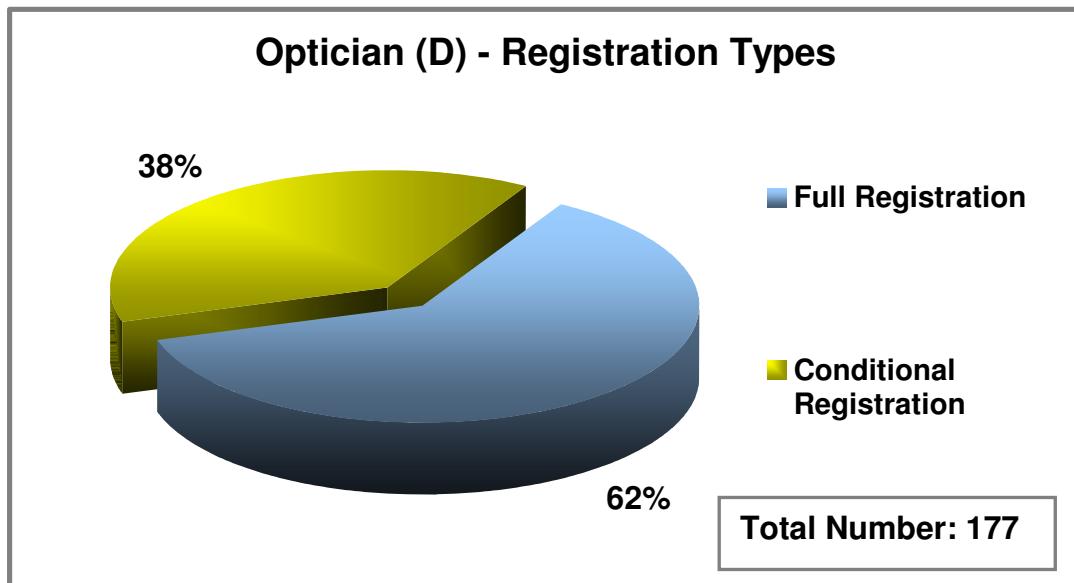


Chart 3(b) – Number of opticians (D) by age group

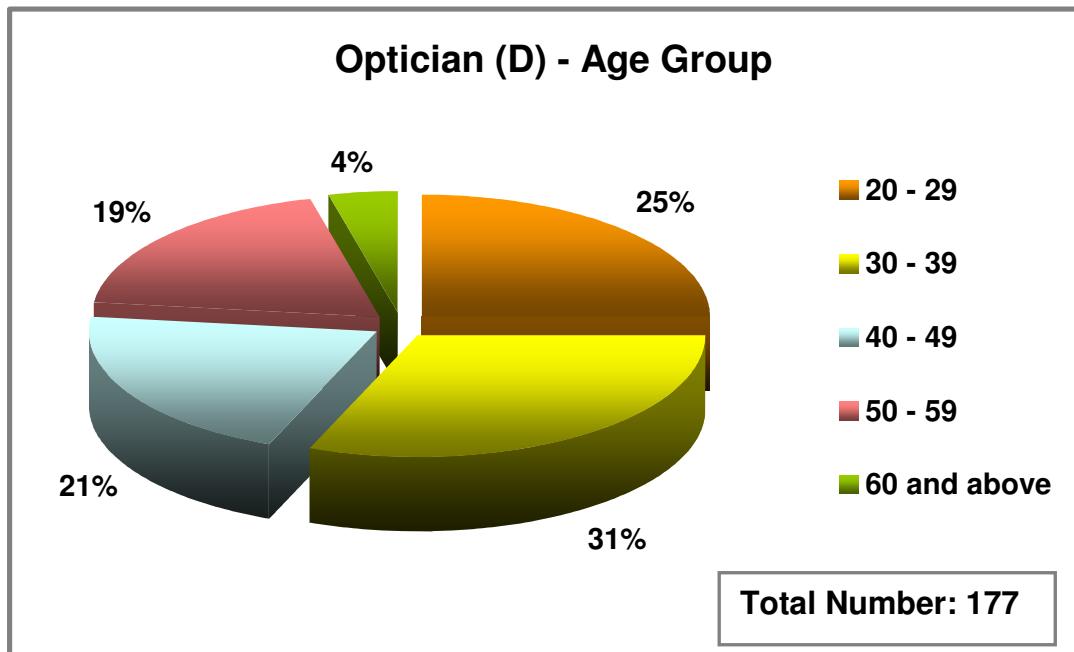


Chart 3(c) – Number of opticians (D) by nationality

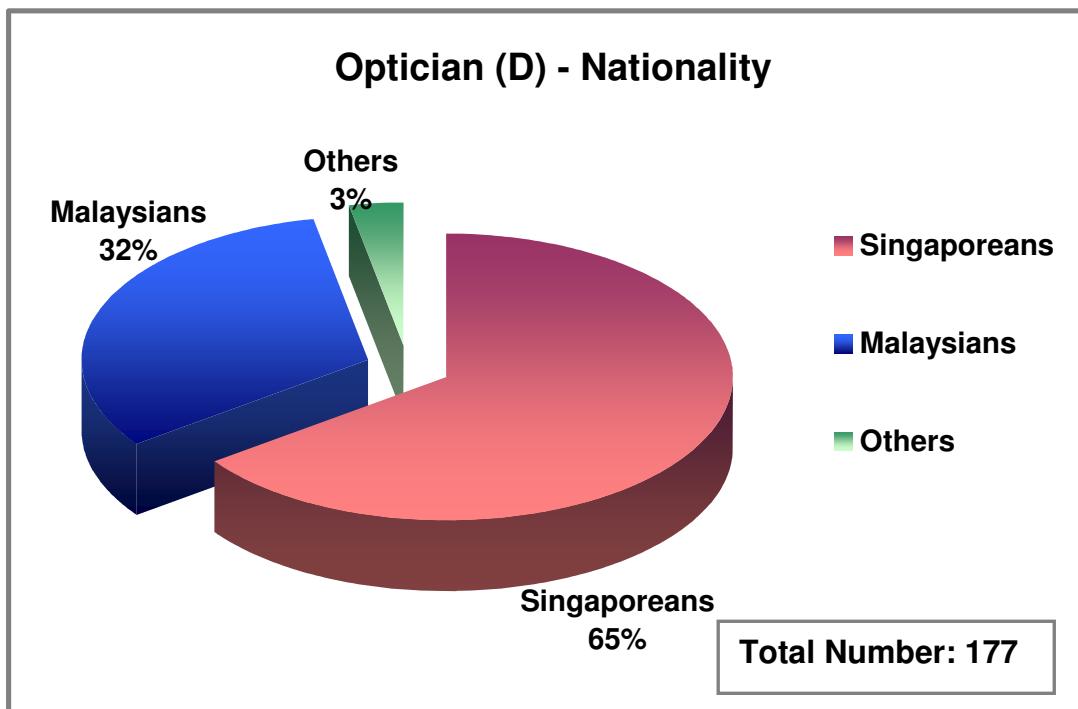
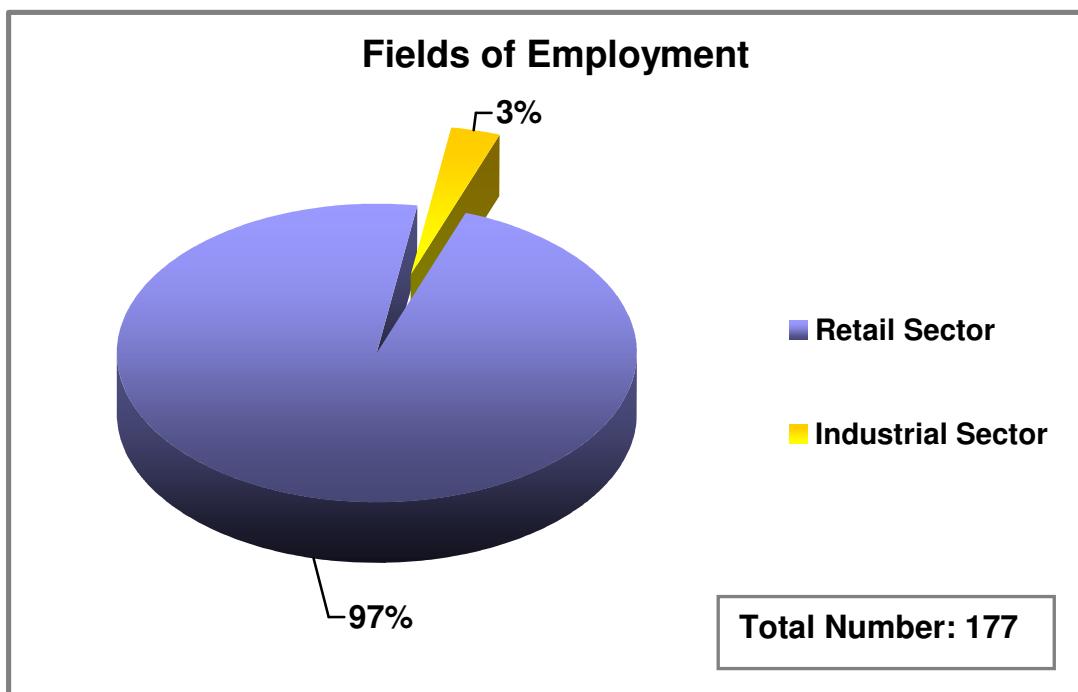


Chart 3(d) – Number of opticians (D) by fields of employment



4. Profiles of Opticians (Contact Lens Practitioner)

Chart 4(a) – Number of opticians (CLP) by registration type

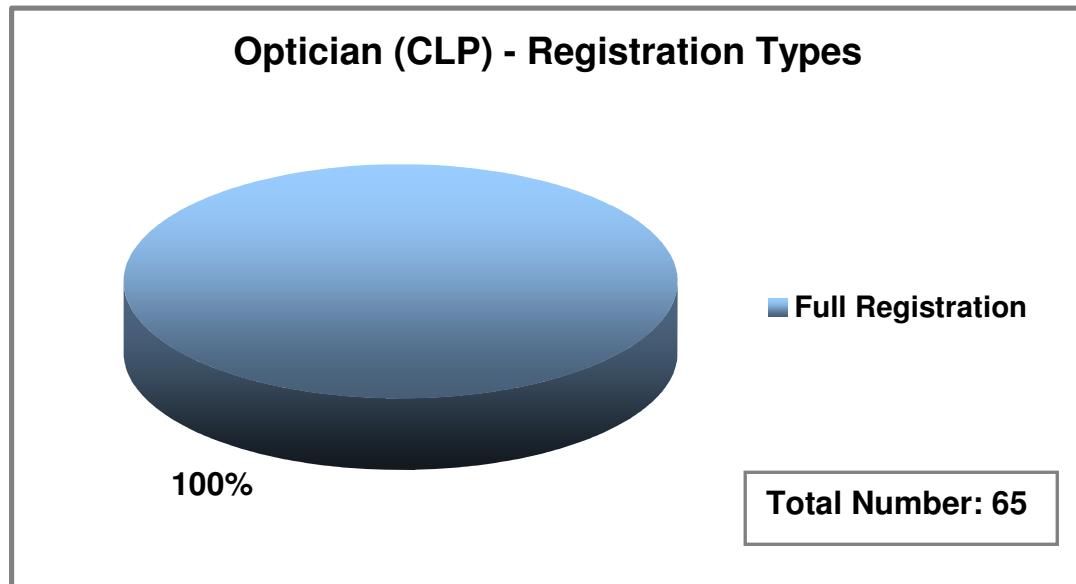


Chart 4(b) – Number of opticians (CLP) by age group

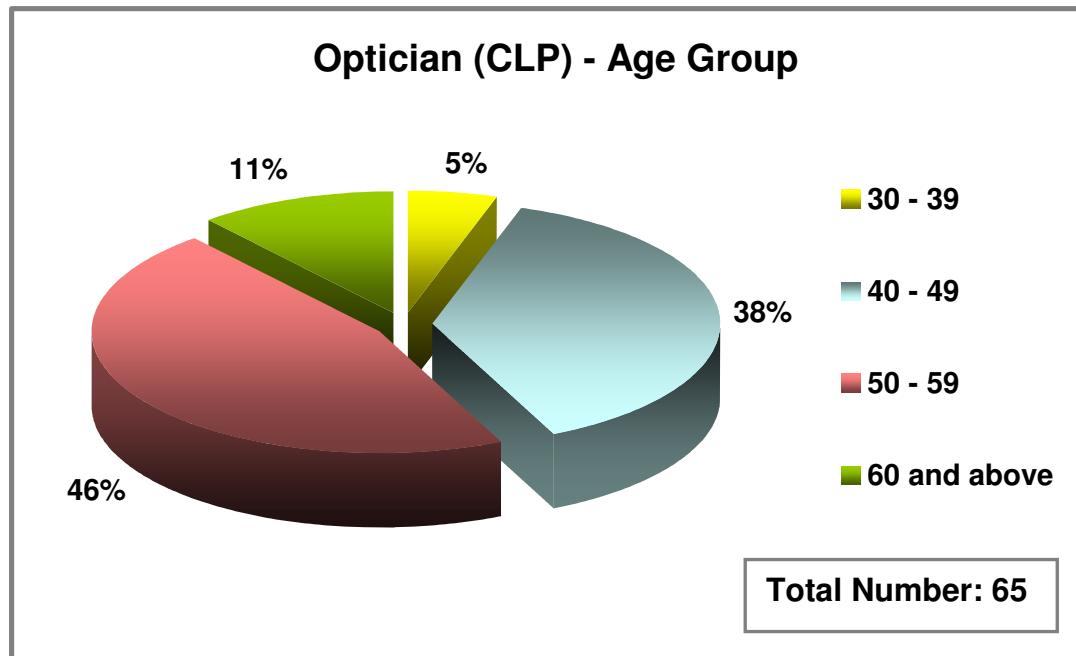


Chart 4(c) – Number of opticians (CLP) by nationality

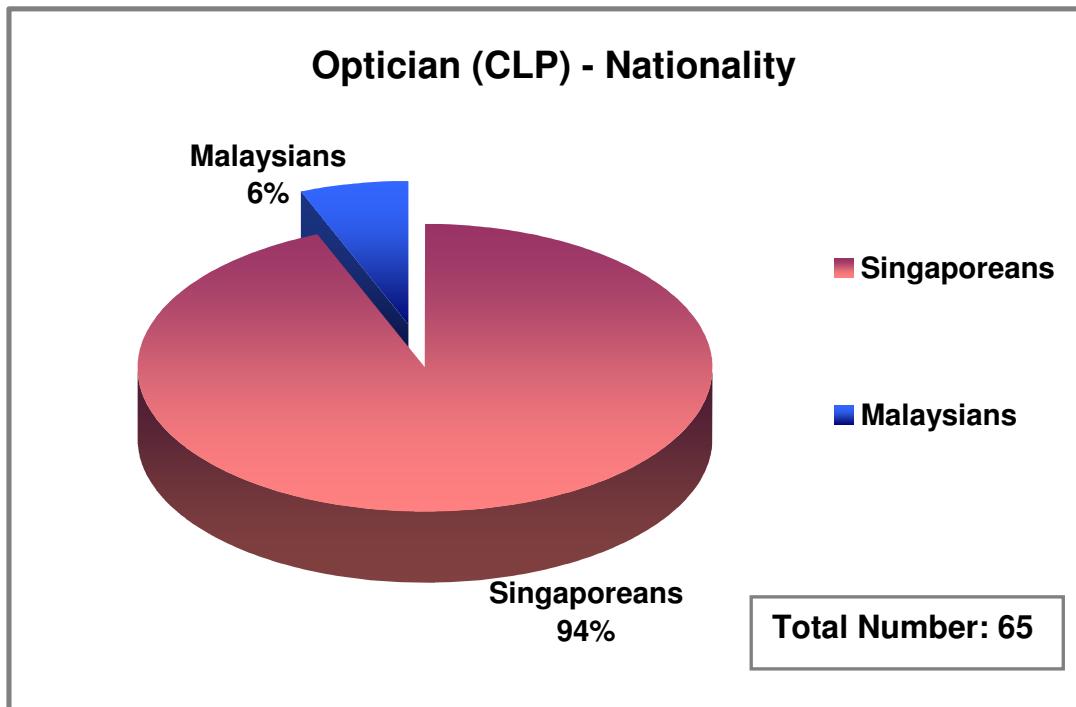
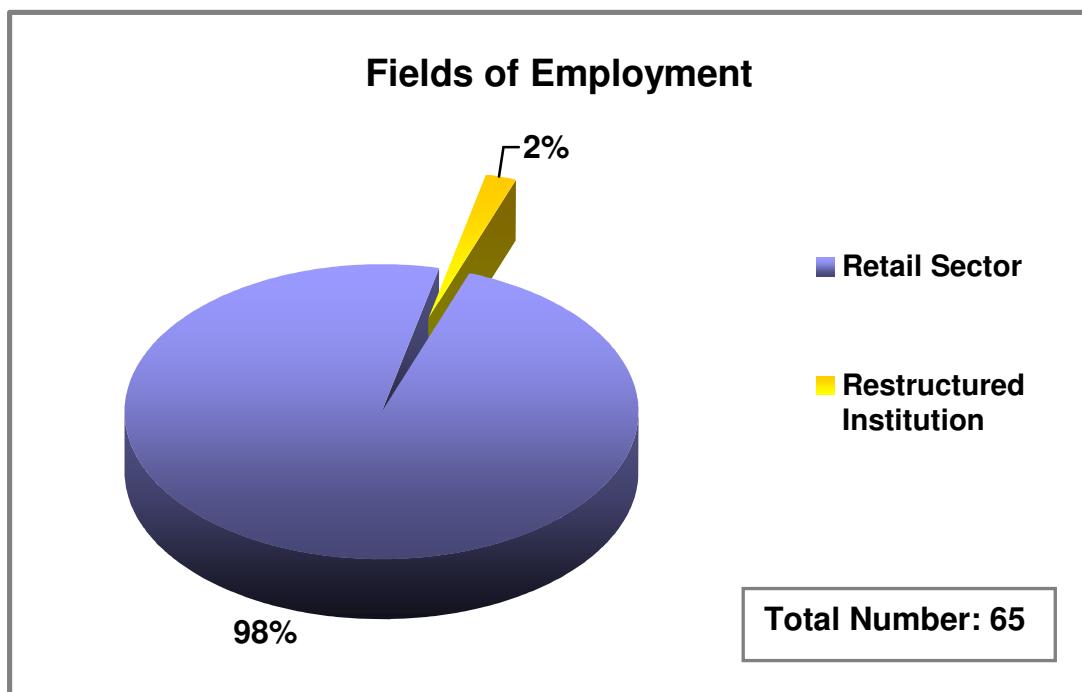


Chart 4(d) – Number of opticians (CLP) by fields of employment



APPENDIX II: Schedule of Fees

Application Fee	\$50
Registration Fee	\$200
Practising Certificate Renewal Fees (2 years):	
- Optometrists	\$300
- Opticians (CLP)	\$280
- Opticians (Refraction & Dispensing)	\$280
- Opticians (Dispensing)	\$200
Late application fee for the renewal of a practising certificate:	
where the application is made less than 30 days before the expiry of the practicing certificate	\$50
where the application is made after the expiry of the practising certificate	\$100
Registration of any additional qualification	\$50
Restoration Fee	\$300
Certified True Copy of Certificate Fee	\$50

APPENDIX III (a): Code of Professional Conduct for Optometrists

The Optometrists and Opticians Board (OOB) is the regulatory body for all optometrists and opticians in Singapore. In order to meet its objectives in regulating these professions, the Board has established and commissioned the Practice Ethics and Conduct Committee to develop this Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) for optometrists.

Patients and the public must be able to trust optometrists with their visual and ocular well being. To justify this trust, optometrists have to maintain a good standard of care, conduct and behaviour. Optometrists are expected to uphold the principles dictated by this Code. Adherence to this Code will also enable public trust and confidence in the profession.

The Code of Professional Conduct constitutes a yardstick for conduct, behaviour and professional ethics for Optometrists. It can be referenced should ethical issues be raised.

It is the view of the Board that disregard or failure to meet the standards of the code can potentially harm patients or bring disrepute to the optometric profession. Breaches of any article in this Code could lead to optometrists being asked to explain their actions and face disciplinary proceedings for professional misconduct.

This Code can be periodically updated to cover areas that were not previously dealt with, including issues arising from advances in optometry, and statutory or regulatory requirements.

1. An optometrist must conduct himself or herself in his or her professional duties in accordance with the Optometrists and Opticians Act 2007 and Regulations and in accordance with this Code. The Code does not override obligations that may be imposed on the practice of optometry by the Optometrists and Opticians Act and Regulations and any other Act or Regulation relating to the practice of optometry.
2. An optometrist must maintain his or her knowledge and practise at a competent level and participate in continuing professional education activities.
3. An optometrist must only perform or participate in those procedures that are within his or her competence and for which he or she is appropriately qualified, and refer those patients whose needs or requests are outside his or her competence, and where necessary follow up the referral.
4. An optometrist must ensure privacy and confidentiality for his or her patients and for their ophthalmic records unless disclosure is necessary in the course of referral to a colleague in his or another healthcare profession or he/she is required to by the Board or the Law. Information

contained in any patient's ophthalmic record should be made available to that patient if requested.

5. An optometrist must not exploit his or her professional relationship with a patient or any other person in the conduct of his or her practice sexually, emotionally or financially or otherwise in any way.
6. An optometrist should take reasonable steps to ensure his or her patients understand at the commencement of any test, procedure or treatment the risks, complications, possible reactions, nature, purpose, cost of and alternatives to the procedure or treatment.
7. An optometrist must treat patients without prejudice of race, religion, creed, social standing, disability or financial status.
8. An optometrist must respect the wish of a patient for a second opinion and, if requested, help the patient obtain the appropriate second opinion.
9. If an optometrist has reason to believe that a colleague is behaving in an unprofessional manner, or that his standard of practice falls substantially below acceptable standards, he should report the conduct to the Optometrists and Opticians Board.
10. An optometrist must not attend to a patient whilst his ability to do so is impaired by the influence of alcohol, drugs or physical or mental illness.

11. An optometrist must maintain professionalism in informing the public about his or her services, ensuring that information projected is factual and does not self aggrandise. An optometrist shall not advertise his or her services in a way that is not consistent with the Optometrists and Opticians (Practice, Conduct, Ethics and Publicity) Regulations or any guidelines promulgated by the Board relating to publicity.

APPENDIX III (b): Code of Professional Conduct for Opticians

The Optometrists and Opticians Board (OOB) is the regulatory body for all optometrists and opticians in Singapore. In order to meet its objectives in regulating these professions, the Board has established and commissioned the Practice Ethics and Conduct Committee to develop this Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) for opticians.

Patients and the public must be able to trust opticians implicitly with their visual and ocular well being. To justify this trust, opticians have to maintain a good standard of care, conduct and behaviour. Opticians are expected to uphold the principles dictated by their Code. Adherence to a Code of Professional Conduct will enable public trust and confidence in the profession.

The Code of Professional Conduct constitutes a yardstick for conduct, behaviour professional ethics. It can be referenced should ethical issues be raised.

The Board's view is that disregard or failure to meet an agreed code of standards amounting to professional misconduct can potentially harm patients or cause disrepute to the opticianry profession. Professional misconduct may be judged through disciplinary proceedings.

This Code can be periodically updated to cover areas that were not previously dealt with, including issues arising from advances in opticianry, and statutory or regulatory requirements.

1. An optician must conduct himself or herself in his or her professional duties in accordance with the Optometrists and Opticians Act 2007 and Regulations and in accordance with this Code. This Code does not over-ride obligations imposed in the practice of opticianry by the Optometrists and Opticians Act and Regulations and any other Act or Regulation relating to the practice of opticianry.
2. An optician must maintain his or her knowledge and practise at a competent level and participate in continuing professional education activities.
3. An optician must only perform or participate in those procedures that are within his or her level of competency and for which he or she is appropriately qualified, and refer those patients whose conditions are outside his or her level of competence.
4. An optician must ensure privacy and confidentiality for his or her patients and their ophthalmic records unless disclosure is necessary in the course of referral to another profession or is required by the Board or the law. Information contained in any patient's ophthalmic record should be made available to that patient if requested.

5. An optician must not exploit his or her professional relationship with a patient or any other person in the conduct of his or her practice sexually, emotionally, financially or otherwise in any way.
6. An optician should take reasonable steps to ensure his or her patients understand any procedure or prescription, risks and complications if any as well as the costs to the patient.
7. An optician must manage his patients without bias or regard for race, religion, creed, social standing, disability or financial status.
8. An optician must respect the wish of a patient for a second opinion and, if requested, help the patient obtain an appropriate second opinion.
9. If an optician has reason to believe that a colleague is behaving in an unprofessional manner, or that his standard of practice falls substantially below acceptable standards, he should report the conduct to the Optometrists and Opticians Board.
10. An optician must not attend to a patient when his ability to do so is impaired by the influence of alcohol, drugs, physical or mental illness.
11. An optician must maintain professionalism in informing the public about his or her services, ensuring that information projected is purely factual

and devoid of any attempt at self aggrandisement. An optician shall not advertise his or her services in a way that is not consistent with the Optometrists and Opticians (Practice, Conduct, Ethics and Publicity) Regulations or any guidelines promulgated by the Board relating to publicity.