What is an Orthoptist?

Orthoptists are health professionals who traditionally specialise in the investigation and management of strabismus (turned eye or squint) and related disorders of eye movements and vision. In addition to this role, Orthoptists in Australia now work in fields as diverse as early childhood development, rehabilitation, eye care for the developmentally delayed and the multi-handicapped, and assessment and management of the visually impaired, rural and aboriginal eye health and eye care in developing countries.

Roles of an Orthoptist

- Investigation, diagnosis and non-surgical management of abnormalities of eye movements and strabismus (turned eye). These disorders of the eyes may cause decreased vision such as amblyopia (lazy eye) or cause symptoms such as double vision or eye strain. Treatment may involve the use of exercises and techniques to control eye movements
- Assessment of children's vision which is very important in the detection, diagnosis and management of Lazy Eye
- Assess visual function of the physically and/or visually impaired and provide programmes to enable the patient to make optimal use of remaining vision
- In conjunction with Ophthalmologists (Medical Eye Specialists), Orthoptists investigate diseases of the eye
- Provide reports on the extent of eye defects to medical practitioners and members of the community
- Provide educational information to patients and members of the community about eye conditions and their effects
- Provide visual screening of groups within the community (eg. pre-school children)
- Provide education and clinical experience for Orthoptic and other Allied Health students
- Participate in research which promotes evidence based practice and a focus on better outcomes

Career Opportunities

- Clinician yr 1 to yr 8
- Student Unit Supervisor
- Project Officer (research)
- Clinical Trial Coordinator
- Service Manager

Qualifications Required

Bachelor of Applied Science (Orthoptics) Sydney University Sydney and La Trobe University Victoria

Supervision provided

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support through the SSWAHS clinical supervision process.
What sort of person should I be?

- Interested in the visual eye health of the community
- Interested in working with the very young and the elderly

Personal skills required of an Orthoptist

- Good communication skills
- Able to work as an individual and as part of a team
- Self motivated
- Dedicated to continuing education

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