A NEW YEAR LIKE NO OTHER


It's finally a new year, and a fresh start is long overdue. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is still in full swing, and we might be better served tempering our expectations; look what happened when we claimed 2020 was going to be "our year"! Still, 2021 has a lot going for it, especially for retina specialists, many of whom barely saw a dip in patient care despite the pandemic. The vaccines are rolling out, providing much-needed security for health care workers and high-risk patients, conference planners—and attendees—are looking forward to in-person meetings (hopefully) later this year, and everyone has a robust collection of fashionable face masks.

We have a long road ahead before we make it out of this pandemic. Hospitalizations are at an all-time high, and a recent national survey found that Americans were less motivated to get the vaccine in December 2020 than they were back in April when this whole thing started, despite the spike in cases after the Thanksgiving holiday.[1] Weekly tracking surveys show that 74% of respondents stated they were likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine when asked between April 1-14, when new cases were hovering around 40,000 daily; that percentage fell to 56% by November 25-December 8, even though new cases were skyrocketing to more than 200,000 daily.[2] Notably, though, close to 70% of those over age 65 still said they were willing to get the vaccine as of December 8.[2]

Added to that less-than-stellar public perception, the logistics of vaccinating the nation are getting in the way, with myriad distribution and administration hurdles. Delayed shipments, holiday schedules, and exhausted local health care systems have slowed the rollout considerably. Officials projected having 20 million people vaccinated by the end of 2020, but they were reporting less than 2.8 million vaccines administered as of New Year's Eve.[3,4] Updated reporting had that number up to about 4.2 million by January 2.[4]

If 2020 taught us anything, it was patience, so don't cancel your Zoom account just yet. We are on our way to taming this virus and getting back to traveling, lecturing, and collaborating in person with one another—soon, but not yet. We can't do much in the way of speeding up the process, but we can encourage our patients, many of whom are high-risk, to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

As we wait for the world to right itself, let's focus on giving our practices a fresh start in 2021. Our annual surgical techniques and technologies issue is brimming with articles highlighting new instruments and approaches to help you improve the eye care experience for your patients and yourself. Experts weigh in on the best techniques for intraocular foreign body removal, IOL repositioning, diabetic vitrectomy, subretinal injection of tissue plasminogen activator, limited vitrectomy for epiretinal membranes, and transradial intraarterial chemotherapy for retinoblastoma. In addition, new technologies such as flexible chandelier systems, heads-up 3D viewing systems, and untethered head-mounted laser indirect ophthalmoscopes are changing the face of vitreoretinal surgery for the better.

Also in this issue you will find a thought-provoking discussion about the fellowship interview process during COVID-19 and a beautiful visual of optic disc coloboma, macular schisis, and serous detachment in the Visually Speaking column on page 44.

We are excited to see what 2021 has in store for us, and we can't wait to share the latest and greatest in retina within the pages of this and future issues of *Retina Today*.

Happy reading and happy New Year! ■

ALLEN C. HO, MD
CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

ROBERT L. AVERY, MD
ASSOCIATE MEDICAL EDITOR

1. Szilagyi PG, Thomas K, Shah MD, et al. National trends in the US public's likelihood of getting a COVID-19 vaccine—April 1 to December 8, 2020 [published online ahead of print, 2020 Dec 29]. *JAMA*.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Trends in number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the US reported to CDC, by state/territory. covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrendscases. Accessed December 31, 2020.
3. Robbins R, Robles F, Arango T. Here's why distribution of the vaccine is taking longer than expected. *New York Times*. December 31, 2020.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC COVID Data Tracker. covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations. Accessed December 31, 2020.