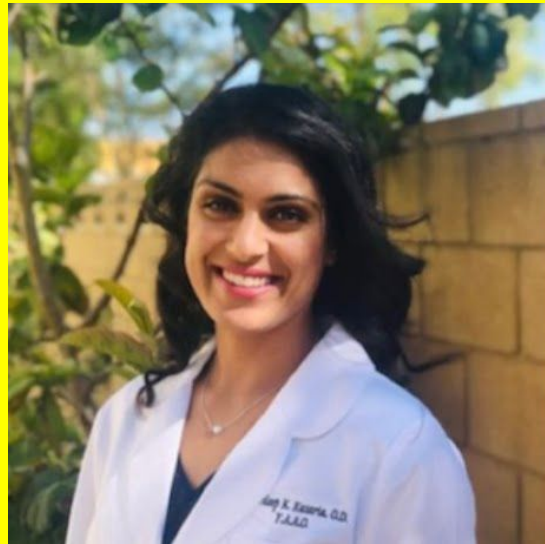


## Episode 5 (Doctor's Aspect on Healthcare)



Doctor Hardeep Kataria (she/her) is known for her magnificent work in the medical field. It was a pleasure to speak to her about her perspective upon the healthcare system. By collaborating her passions for education, empowerment, fitness and medicine, she became one of the most prominent all-rounded female contributors towards the practice of optometry. As a person of color and YouTube Director at Med N' Ed, I found it to be highly significant to express Dr. Kataria's contributions to the consistent advancements within the medical field to inspire future health care professionals in the making.

I initiated the discussion by asking her to speak a little bit about where she is from and what inspired her to become a professional in eyecare. Born and raised in London, England but currently residing in California, Dr. Kataria has dedicated herself to eye care medical optometry as a way to apply her curiosity upon raising awareness about a subject matter in medicine that is often overlooked. In addition to that, Dr. Kataria takes a significant amount of pride within engaging in a profession that helps her to be informative towards the world around her regarding ways to prevent being diagnosed with medical conditions pertaining to the eye. She finds herself to be ambitious towards constantly finding affairs to research about her position through exploration of the many ways in which optometry has an impact upon the overall physical health of the people. The ability to dedicate herself to lifelong learning in areas that go beyond providing medical diagnoses within the field of eyecare promote her motivation for it.

After that, I asked her about how she would describe her strengths and weaknesses from when she initially started off with medical optometry and through what ways she would compare these factors to how much she has grown since then. She emphasized upon her development in confidence when it came to her networking skills. For example, she highlighted upon the importance of her interactions with a multitude of physical settings in optometry. To be more specific, she mentioned how important she found it to be able to be communicative with those who she was working with by asking questions (whether it was to employers or additional

healthcare professionals). Dr. Kataria went on to make a point about how learning what to do with the responses which she would be given by her surrounding environment would be her route to success and learning to overcome the challenges of coming to terms with “no”.

When asked about her concerns regarding healthcare beyond just the existence of medical conditions within the United States today, she talked about the imbalance regarding access to healthcare when it comes to low-income families. Based on the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on populations all around the world, she was able to highlight how that awareness contributed to her perspective on how the ideal healthcare system does not exist. From the standpoint of Dr. Kataria, this is due to the fact that all patients and doctors come from different backgrounds with distinctive experiences that shape elements of their identity. Thus, the best interests of all those who are either in need of access to health care or those who are capable of providing primary care is not the same for everybody. This is due to the differences in their personal narratives, whether this is in reference to the skill set of medical leaders or the medical conditions which patients originally come in with at the doctor’s office.

Then our conversation directed towards talking about how the ways in which Dr. Katarina found optometry to be applied towards the process of further researching the causes, effects and treatment options for the COVID-19 disease. For example, she talked about the importance of looking into the relationship between COVID-19 and the wearing of glasses and/or contact lenses. She also discussed the importance of being up to date with medical expertise on eyecare due to much of the productivity within the universe being transitioned to digital methods which happen to require further use of technologies that can take a toll upon one’s pair of eyes.

The discussion on COVID-19 with Dr. Kataria continued as we spoke about her experiences with taking the vaccine. This has served to be a valuable source of information for viewers who have yet to attain a vaccination. For instance, she talked about how difficult it was for her to gain access to the vaccine in the first place by mentioning the many long hours of having to wait and stand in line. As a matter of fact, she still has not been able to receive a second dosage. This tied into our transition towards our next topic which was about what changes she would be willing to make (if theoretically put in a position to do so) about the policies of distributing the vaccine to the general public. When focusing on this talking point, Dr. Kataria spoke out on ways she would improve the websites where eligible people were intended to sign up for vaccination appointments and fix technological issues, such as the non-functioning links on the browsers. She also mentioned how she would concentrate on updating the logistics of making sure the availability of COVID-19 vaccines would correspond with the quantity of dosages in existence.

Later on, our conversation took a turn towards Dr. Kataria’s outlook on the different categories of advice which she would be willing to give to the medical students of contemporary times. To be more precise, I asked her about what takeaways she would be able to share with the audience on making the transition from being a medical student in medical school to establishing herself as a certified medical professional out there in the real world. The major theme of her response to this particular inquiry was the ways in which being community-oriented

had driven her productivity. She talked about the importance of staying in touch with colleagues, clients and employers even after working with them. This is because it enabled her to have a network that she was able to invest her teamwork-oriented skills towards. Dr. Kataria is a strong believer in the concept that the connections which she was able to build with those around her had played a fundamental role in her growing understanding of the clinical practices she was involved with. This is because such professional relations facilitated her journey by providing her with more room to exchange and expand on her knowledge with peers. Her advice to me was “You never know when you might need someone or when they might need you and for what reasons”.

It looks like Dr. Kataria definitely does have the back of not only future medical leaders, but also everyone who has somehow been a part of her route towards becoming an eye-care specialist. To wrap up our conversation, my last question for her was whether there were any last minute tips specifically on eye care which she would be willing to share with the general public. She mentioned the importance of committing to timely check-ins with doctors of optometry in order to complete eye examinations with them. This is because problems with the eye can take a toll on other elements of one’s physical body and lead towards the medical diagnoses of broader diseases, including but not limited to glaucoma and diabetes. Issues can be deeper than simply requiring the need for prescribed eye glasses or contact lenses. Therefore, Dr. Kataria stresses the significance of choosing to keep in touch with optometrists who are knowledgeable about not only identifying disorders pertaining to the eye, but also treating them as soon as possible.

All in all, it was an absolute pleasure speaking with the diligent Dr. Kataria. Our organization was honored to be able to hear her insightful thoughts and ideas. To our audience, thank you for connecting with us today and please remember to stay up to date with the news and stay safe!