

History of optometry

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The history of optometry can be traced back to the early studies on optics and image formation by the eye. The origins of optometric science (optics, as taught in a basic physics class) date back a few thousand years BC as evidence of the existence of lenses for decoration has been found. It is unknown when the first spectacles were made, but the British scientist and historian Sir Joseph Needham stated in his research that the ancient Chinese invented the earliest eyeglasses 1000 years ago and were also mentioned by the Venetian Marco Polo in his account of his travels in ancient China.

Alternatively, research by David A. Goss in the United States, shows they may have originated independently in the late 13th century in Italy as stated in a manuscript from 1305 where a monk from Pisa named Rivalto stated " It is not yet 20 years since there was discovered the art of making eyeglasses". Spectacles were manufactured in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands by 1300. Benito Daza de Valdes published the third book on optometry in 1623, where he mentioned the use and fitting of eyeglasses.

In 1692, William Molyneux wrote a book on optics and lenses where he stated his ideas on myopia and problems related to close-up vision. The scientists Claudius Ptolemy and Johannes Kepler also contributed to the creation of optometry. Kepler discovered how the retina in the eye creates vision. From 1773 until around 1829, Thomas Young discovered the disability of astigmatism and it was George Biddell Airy who designed glasses to correct that problem that included spherocylindrical lens.

Although the term optometry appeared in the 1759 book *A Treatise on the Eye: The Manner and Phenomena of Vision* by Scottish physician William Porterfield, it was not until the early twentieth century in the United States

and Australia that it began to be used to describe the profession. By the late twentieth century however, marking the distinction with dispensing opticians, it had become the internationally accepted term.