



Meet Optometry's Rising Star

Modern optometrist Dr. Nadia Afkhami leverages technology and social media to connect with her extensive patient base

by Chow Ee-Tan

Dr. Nadia Afkhami, a first-generation Iranian-American optometrist, has gained recognition as one of the winners of the 2022 Eyecare Business Game Changer Awards. Passionate about making a tangible difference in the industry, she embraces technology and social media to connect with patients, boasting over 16.9K followers on Instagram.

Approachable, determined, and creative, Dr. Nadia Afkhami loves establishing a connection with people and changing their lives with something as simple as an eye exam. "I am deeply passionate about making a tangible difference in people's lives by optimizing their vision and overall eye health," she shared in an interview with *COOKIE Magazine*.

Navigating a path to excellence in healthcare

Fluent in both English and her native language, Farsi, Dr. Afkhami came from a close-knit family that has always encouraged academic pursuits.

"My educational journey has been focused on pursuing excellence in my field. I always knew I wanted to be in the healthcare industry since I was a child. The thought of helping people was greatly embedded in me from a young age," she shared. "Optometry wasn't my initial career ambition, but my fascination with vision science and its impact on people's lives inspired me to explore this field."

According to Dr. Afkhami, the ability to improve someone's quality of life through better vision care has become her motivation to pursue optometry.

During her university years, she completed a vast array of internships, including at private and public OMD/OD practices, Veterans Affairs Hospitals, and an Indian Health Services Hospital. She gained experience treating and managing ocular diseases, as well as addressing binocular vision needs.

"University provided a solid foundation, but internships truly enriched my learning. They exposed me to diverse cases, allowing me to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, fostering both professional growth and confidence," she shared.

Dr. Afkhami is also one of the original Student Ambassadors for Transitions and has worked with companies like



Essilor, Zyware, Prive Revaux, and Luxottica.

Optometry in the social media spotlight

One of her strengths lies in her technological and social media savvy. Through her Instagram account, @eyeamdrnadia, which boasts more than 16.8K followers, Dr. Afkhami shares insights into optometry. Since her undergraduate days, this optometrist has been uniting a new generation of eye care providers with her relatable social media content.

“When studying optometry, I was happy to take breaks from bookwork to manage my social media page. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, I felt that it helped me connect with people at a time when many were lonely and needed an outlet for connection. I’m happy to have been one of those people that others connected with,” she shared.

“I don’t worry about numbers. I post what is meaningful to me and to my patients. I think people can see that my posts are authentic and connect to me more because they really feel as though they know me.”

Dr. Afkhami believes that social media serves as a platform to educate and engage with the community on eye health. It helps in spreading awareness, sharing valuable tips, and establishing a connection beyond the clinical setting, thereby enhancing the patient-provider relationship.

“I’ve been fortunate to share my optometry life and my personal life all in one page. My followers connect with me on some level, and I’m grateful for that. Seeing them laugh, share, and comment lets me know that for just a moment in their day, I was able to bring joy to them in some way,” she continued.

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A game changer in eye care

Dr. Afkhami feels extremely honored to have been recognized as a winner in the 2022 Eyecare Business Game Changer Awards.

“Winning such an award early in my career was incredibly humbling. I believe my innovative approaches to patient care and dedication to leveraging technology for better outcomes contributed to being chosen,” she enthused. “It was truly my dream to be recognized for my accomplishments in the industry. I think that the industry recognized that I had made such big strides early in my career. It was truly an honor to be chosen,” she gratefully shared.

After graduating in 2022, Dr. Afkhami joined a team of optometrists at

Vision Source Oviedo, a provider of quality vision services in Oviedo, Florida. It has been an enriching experience for her so far.

“I’m passionate about exploring specializations related to ortho-k lenses, scleral, and amniotic membranes. I also have a keen interest in medical-based optometry. I think I would enjoy having a combination of private practice and gaining more medical-based experiences at the VA and Indian Health Services Hospital,” she shared.

Dr. Afkhami is also involved in community outreach for young women and children who have an interest in science. In her spare time, she likes spending time with friends and family.

She believes that being a modern optometrist entails maintaining a practice that embraces technology, offering personalized care, and focusing on preventive measures. Building strong relationships with clients and being a source of trusted guidance are also crucial in providing comprehensive eye care.





“As a new generation of modern optometrists, I believe we are also more empathetic in our approach to practice. We want our patients to feel cared for by someone who thinks of them as their friends rather than just another patient. Modern optometrists are also more vocal and more involved. And as optometry changes over time, we can help change and shift things for the better,” Dr. Afkhami continued.

Collaboration with the eyeglasses industry

Dr. Afkhami also believes optometrists play a pivotal role in collaborating with the eyeglasses industry. “Working hand-in-hand allows us to provide patients with a wide array of options that cater to both their vision needs and lifestyle preferences,” she said.

She highlights recent advancements in the eyeglasses industry, which include incorporating innovative lens materials, customizable frames and augmented reality for virtual try-ons. These developments aim to enhance

comfort, aesthetics, and the overall user experience.

“Another great thing about optometry—you can embrace a fashionable side with frames and glasses while projecting an academic and medical persona. This always interested me because eyeglasses can help strike a great balance,” she added.

Dedication and passion in action

In her practice, challenges can also arise in managing diverse patient needs and expectations. She admits that gender and ethnicity have occasionally posed challenges, but through open communication, empathy, and a focus on quality care, she is confident that she can overcome such barriers.

She added that her inspiration and motivation include witnessing the immediate positive impact of proper eye care on patients’ lives, as well as

the ability to continuously learn and adapt in a dynamic field.

Indeed, Dr. Afkhami’s dedication to her field is evident, as well as her passion for making a tangible difference in people’s lives by optimizing their vision and overall eye health.

“I am immensely grateful for the opportunities to serve the community and contribute to the field of optometry. I’m excited about the future possibilities in eye care and committed to providing the best care to my patients,” she concluded. 🧐



Contributor

Dr. Nadia Afkhami, OD, was born in Iran and embarked on a new journey at the age of two, immigrating to the United States with her family. From an early age, her fascination with optometry sparked a passion that would shape her future. Driven by a deep-seated curiosity about vision science and its impact on people’s lives, she pursued a career in optometry, aiming to provide exceptional eye care to her community. Outside her professional endeavors, Dr. Afkhami cherishes spending quality time with her friends and family. Whether engaging in leisurely activities or lively conversations, she values these moments dearly. Her free time often revolves around creating cherished memories with loved ones, be it exploring new places, sharing meals, or simply enjoying each other’s company. Throughout her journey as an optometrist, Dr. Afkhami has remained dedicated to her patients, ensuring they receive the best possible care. Her commitment to the field extends beyond the clinic, intertwining with a passion for fostering meaningful relationships with those she serves and cherishes. She has been able to connect with others through her social media page on Instagram and with her new collaborative podcast, *The Depth Perception*.

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