



Maria K. Walker

Maria K Walker is a clinician scientist with an expertise and background in ocular surface diseases and specialty contact lenses. She graduated with an OD and MS degree from The New England College of Optometry in 2013 and went on to complete a one-year Cornea & Contact Lens Residency at Pacific University in Portland, OR. In 2014 she joined the faculty of UHCO and in 2021 completed her PhD with a dissertation entitled: “The Impact of a Scleral Lens on the Eye”.

Throughout her education and early career, Maria has won several awards including the Sheldon Wechsler contact lens residency award, the Founders’ Grant from the International Society of Contact Lens Specialists, and she is a two-time recipient of the Ezell Fellowship offered through the American Optometric Foundation (AOF). She is also the 2021 recipient of the Clinical Research Award given by the AOF. Maria is an active Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry, a member of the Association for Vision & Research in Ophthalmology, a Fellow and past president of the Scleral Lens Education Society, as well as an advisory board member of the Gas Permeable Lens Institute.

Maria’s primary research interests in recent years have been to evaluate the physiological effects of scleral lenses on the ocular surface, as well as to investigate the role of the immune system in provoking and propagating inflammation on the ocular surface in diseases (i.e., keratoconus). In September 2021 she was appointed an Assistant Professor at the University of Houston College of Optometry, where she has spent the past 2 years setting up a translational wet lab to study inflammation in keratoconus and scleral lens wear. Early investigations in our lab have led us to focus on the role of immune cells, specifically neutrophils and eosinophils, in keratoconus.

Complete List of Published Work in My Bibliography:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/myncbi/1tS6vhDxfaeQQ/bibliography/54205671/public/?sort=date&direction=ascending>