OCUTECH® Sight Enhancement Technology

Prescribing telescopes for watching television

With the advent of large flat screen televisions watching the TV is no longer as challenging as it once was for the visually impaired.

The TV picture controls should be adjusted to maximize brightness, sharpness and contrast. The individual should sit at the furthest distance from the screen that allows them to see facial detail on the screen adequately. This distance will allow the viewer to see much of the activity on the screen but will likely not be adequate to see finer detail such as text and sport scores. A bioptic telescope will allow the user to see this finer detail that would otherwise not be visible. The individual will simply watch the television with their normal vision, and tip their head down to view through the telescope when additional magnification is needed (since the telescope is unlikely to allow the user to see the entire TV screen at one time). Using a bioptic for this purpose is very easy and convenient.

We suggest these steps to determine whether a telescope will be helpful for watching television

1. In the clinic, determine the furthest distance that the individual can see a face adequately
2. Choose a telescope power that provides ample magnification to achieve 20/40 (6/12) at distance.
3. Position the telescope in front of their preferred seeing eye with their distance correction in place (if any)
4. For focusable telescopes, adjust the focus for the distance determined in step #1. For SightScope telescopes choose a reading cap appropriate for the working distance in step #1 if closer than 6 feet (1.8m).
5. Holding a large continuous text reading card (such as the MN Read Card) at the distance determined in step #1, test to see if the patient can read the 4M text fluently.
    - If they can, consider a lower power telescope to provide a wider field of view
    - If they cannot, consider either a higher power telescope or moving to a closer distance (and change the focus or reading cap power appropriately).