



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL
CENTER

Fellowship *in* Vitreoretinal Diseases *and* Surgery

VANDERBILT

EYE INSTITUTE

Letter from the Director



Dear Fellowship Applicant,

We are so excited you have chosen to pursue training in an incredible field that will challenge and reward you throughout your entire career. At Vanderbilt, we look forward to fostering your growth as a surgeon, scholar, and member of the retina community. We aim for you to learn in an environment that is rich with both discovery and camaraderie.

Fellowship training is a special time in your professional career —you are going to meet some amazing colleagues and mentors along the way. The relationships you form now will continue to mature long after you complete your training. The next two years represent a golden opportunity to learn within the confines of a safe and structured environment from some of the most brilliant and talented physicians in all of medicine. Please allow us to personally welcome you to the Retina community and wish you well on the journey ahead.

Avni Finn, MD MBA, Fellowship Director on behalf of the VEI Retina Faculty

About Us

SITUATED IN THE heart of Nashville, Tennessee, Vanderbilt Eye Institute has experienced dramatic growth over the past decade. The Retina Division consists of 10 full-time faculty covering every aspect of vitreoretinal pathology. We have been training fellows since 2004 and our mission is to provide competent, compassionate retina care while educating the next generation of physicians.





Our Team



Avni Finn, MD, MBA
FELLOWSHIP: Duke
• Fellowship Program Director
• Medical Director of Imaging



Edward 'Ted' Cherney, MD
FELLOWSHIP: Moorfields Eye Hospital
• Associate Fellowship Director
• Ocular Trauma



Milam Brantley, MD, PhD
FELLOWSHIP: Moorfields Eye Hospital
• Inherited Retinal Diseases
• Associate Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs



Sapna Gangaputra, MD, MPH
FELLOWSHIP: National Eye Institute
• Director of Clinical Trials
• Uveitis



Irina De la Huerta, MD, PhD
FELLOWSHIP: William Beaumont Hospital
• Pediatric Retina



Abdul-Hadi Kaakour, MD
FELLOWSHIP: Cole Eye Institute



Stephen J. Kim, MD
FELLOWSHIP: Wilmer (Uveitis) Emory (Retina)
• Chief, Retina Division
• Uveitis



Janice Law, MD
FELLOWSHIP: Vanderbilt Eye Institute
• Vice Chair for Education
• Director of Medical Student Education



Megan Steinkerchner, MD
FELLOWSHIP: Vanderbilt Eye Institute
• Ocular Oncology



Paul Sternberg, Jr., MD
FELLOWSHIP: Duke
• Ocular Oncology

About Our Fellowship

Vanderbilt Eye Institute

THE PURPOSE OF the fellowship program is to train competent, compassionate clinicians who have mastered the most advanced methods of surgical and medical management of diseases of the retina and vitreous. The fellowship program provides an intensive, challenging, broad-based clinical and surgical experience with the goal of motivating physicians to pursue leadership roles.

APPOINTMENT • Clinical Fellow/ Instructors will have a primary appointment in Graduate Medical Education and a secondary appointment in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences.

SCHEDULE • The fellowship is for two years. Approximately equal time will be spent in the clinic and in the operating room during each year. Dedicated time is available for research.

AFFILIATED HOSPITALS • The majority of the fellowship experience is provided at the Vanderbilt Eye Institute. Time is also spent at the neighboring Vanderbilt University Medical Center main hospital, Tennessee Valley Nashville Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital, and Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, all within a five-minute walk of the Eye Institute.



CLINICAL ACTIVITIES • The fellowship offers comprehensive training in the medical and surgical management of a wide variety of vitreoretinal diseases, including retinal detachment, retinal vascular disease, macular disease, intraocular tumors, uveitis, proliferative vitreoretinopathy, ocular trauma, and pediatric retinal disorders. Through progressively increasing participation over two years, the fellow will gain autonomy in clinical decision-making and treatment.

At Vanderbilt, the fellow works with retina faculty in the evaluation and treatment of adult and pediatric patients in the private referral clinics. He/she will participate in clinical diagnosis, treatment planning, office procedures and will assist faculty in the teaching of residents and medical students. At the Nashville VA Hospital, the fellow, along with a faculty member, will

direct the retina service, where he/she will supervise residents in clinic, oversee and perform injections and laser photocoagulation procedures, and assist and perform surgery.

SURGICAL TRAINING • The fellow will receive a rigorous surgical training experience where he/she can expect to participate in 800–1000 cases with the goal of **500 cases as primary surgeon**. There is a broad range of cases including routine vitrectomy for macular surgery, complex retinal detachment repairs, diabetic tractional detachments, primary scleral buckles and scleral-sutured

and scleral-fixated IOLs. The fellow will also be exposed to ocular oncology and pediatric surgical cases.

There is dedicated ophthalmology operating space in the Vanderbilt adult and pediatric operating rooms and the Nashville VA, staffed by trained ophthalmic nurses and operating staff. The operating rooms feature state-of-the-art equipment including Zeiss operating microscopes with intraoperative OCT and the ReSIGHT viewing system. Additionally, our OR is equipped with the NGENUITY 3D Heads-up display to help facilitate trainee surgical development



ANCILLARY SERVICES • State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment including digital fundus and anterior segment photography, fluorescein and indocyanine green angiography, spectral-domain optical coherence tomography, B-scan ultrasonography and UBM, and electroretinography is used at Vanderbilt. Additionally, we have access to RetCam and Optos wide-field fundus photography along with OCT angiography. The fellow will have ample opportunity to learn the techniques for performing and interpreting these tests

LECTURES AND CONFERENCES • We hold weekly retina fellowship conferences alternating between medical and surgical cases. We also hold quarterly journal clubs. Conferences are attended by all retina faculty, fellows, and rotating students to provide a collegial environment to discuss interesting cases and ongoing research.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES • The fellow will participate in a clinical or laboratory research project of his or her interest, to be outlined early in the first year. The fellow can also expect to participate in ongoing clinical trials including studies of macular disease, age-related macular degeneration, and retinal angiogenesis. Presentation of original research at national conferences will be encouraged and supported.

EVALUATIONS • Fellows receive both formal and informal feedback from faculty. Semi-annual meetings will be held to evaluate the fellow's performance and to provide an opportunity to discuss the fellowship experience.

COMPENSATION • The salary is commensurate with PGY status. A stipend is available for educational development and travel to national meetings for presentations. Malpractice and health insurance



premiums are covered. Additionally, fellows receive a personal discretionary account for equipment, meeting travel and expenses.

VACATION • Fellows are allowed three weeks of vacation each in the first year and second year.

CALL SCHEDULE • The fellows will share call for the retina division, one week at a time, with backup provided by the surgical retina preceptors.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT • We work closely with the fellows to help guide their career path throughout their fellowship. Additionally, the faculty foster networking opportunities through local, national, and international meetings.

Recent Fellows



Oscar Kuruvilla, MD (2014–2015)*
Medical School: Ohio State University
Residency: Henry Ford Medical Center
Current Position and Contact Information:
Mecklenburg Eye Associates
Charlotte, NC
oscar.kuruvilla@gmail.com



Shriji N. Patel, MD, MBA (2014–2016)
Medical School: Rutgers University
Residency: Rutgers University
Current Position and Contact Information:
Vanderbilt Eye Institute
Nashville, TN
shriji.patel@vumc.org



Gowtham Jonna, MD (2015–2017)
Medical School: Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School
Residency: Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Current Position and Contact Information:
Retina Consultants of Austin
Austin, TX
gjonna@e-retina.net



Alia Durrani, MD (2016–2018)
Medical School: Vanderbilt University
Residency: Wills Eye Hospital at Thomas
Jefferson University
Current Position and Contact Information:
The Retina Institute
St. Louis MO
aliadurrani@gmail.com



Laura Snyder, MD (2016–2018)
Medical School: Case Western Reserve
University School of Medicine
Residency: University of Chicago
Medical Center
Current Position and Contact Information:
NC Retina Associates
Raleigh, NC
laurasnyder08@gmail.com



Tomas Moreno, MD (2017–2019)
Medical School: Duke University
Residency: Vanderbilt
Current Position and Contact Information:
Florida Retina Institute
Jacksonville, FL
tomas.a.moreno@gmail.com



Rishabh Date, MD (2018–2020)
Medical School: UCLA
Residency: Baylor
Current Position and Contact Information:
New Jersey Retina
Elizabeth, NJ
rishabh.date@gmail.com



Heather Tamez, MD (2018–2020)
Medical School: Ohio State University
Residency: Vanderbilt
Current Position and Contact Information:
Retina Care Center
Lake Falls Professional Building
heather.m.tamez@gmail.com



Kenneth Taubenslag, MD (2019–2021)

Medical School: Vanderbilt University
Medical School

Residency: University of Pittsburgh

Current Position and Contact Information:

University of Maryland
k.taubenslag@gmail.com



Nicolaas DeRuyter, MD (2022–2024)

Medical School: University of Washington
School of Medicine

Residency: Vanderbilt Eye Institute

Current Position and Contact Information:

Pacific Northwestern Retina
Seattle, WA
nicolaas.deruyter@gmail.com



Paul Mallory, MD (2020–2022)

Medical School: University of South Dakota

Residency: University of Minnesota

Current Position and Contact Information:

Southeast Eye Specialists
Skyline Medical Plaza
Madison, TN



Tahreem Mir, MD (2022–2024)

Medical School: Aga Khan University
Medical College–Pakistan

Residency: Yale School of Medicine

Current Position and Contact Information:

University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA
tahreemaman2013@gmail.com



Kurt Scavelli, MD (2020–2022)

Medical School: Case Western Reserve
University School of Medicine

Residency: University of Pennsylvania
Scheie Eye Institute

Current Position and Contact Information:

North Carolina Retina Associates
Raleigh, NC



Russel Dinh, MD (2023–2025)

Medical School: Virginia Commonwealth
University

Residency: Medstar Georgetown University

Current Position and Contact Information:

Retina Group of Washington
Washington, DC
russel.dinh@gmail.com



Archana Nair, MD, MS (2021–2023)

Medical School: Stanford University

Residency: NYU

Current Position and Contact Information:

Greater Dallas Retina
McKinney, TX
nair.a.archana@gmail.com



Megan Steinkerchner, MD (2024–2026)

Medical School: University of Toledo
College of Medicine and Life Sciences

Residency: Cleveland Clinic-Cole Eye
Institute

Current Position and Contact Information:

Vanderbilt Eye Institute
Nashville, TN
megan.steinkerchner@vumc.org



Contact Information

Fellowship Director

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Associate Fellowship Director

Edward Cherney, MD
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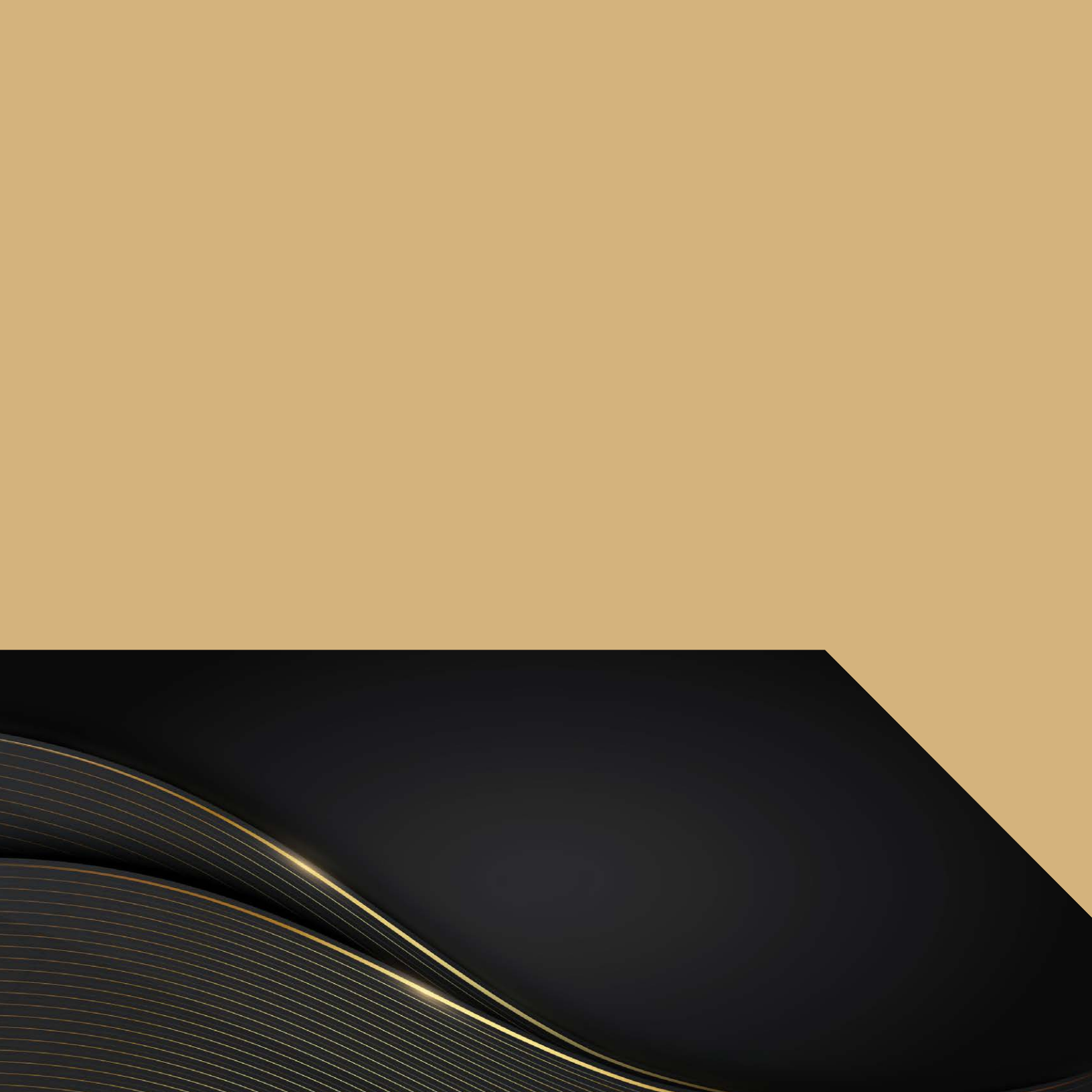
Fellowship Coordinator

Nekole Williams
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FELLOWSHIP WEBSITE







Vanderbilt Eye Institute