



Fellowship *in* Vitreoretinal Diseases *and* Surgery

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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 9 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



**Paul Sternberg, Jr., MD**  
FELLOWSHIP: Duke  

- Ocular Oncology



# About Our Fellowship



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  
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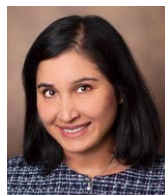
**Paul Mallory, MD (2020–2022)**

*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









# Contact Information

## **Fellowship Director**

Edward Cherney, MD  
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## **Associate Fellowship Director**

Avni Finn, MD, MBA  
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## **Fellowship Coordinator**

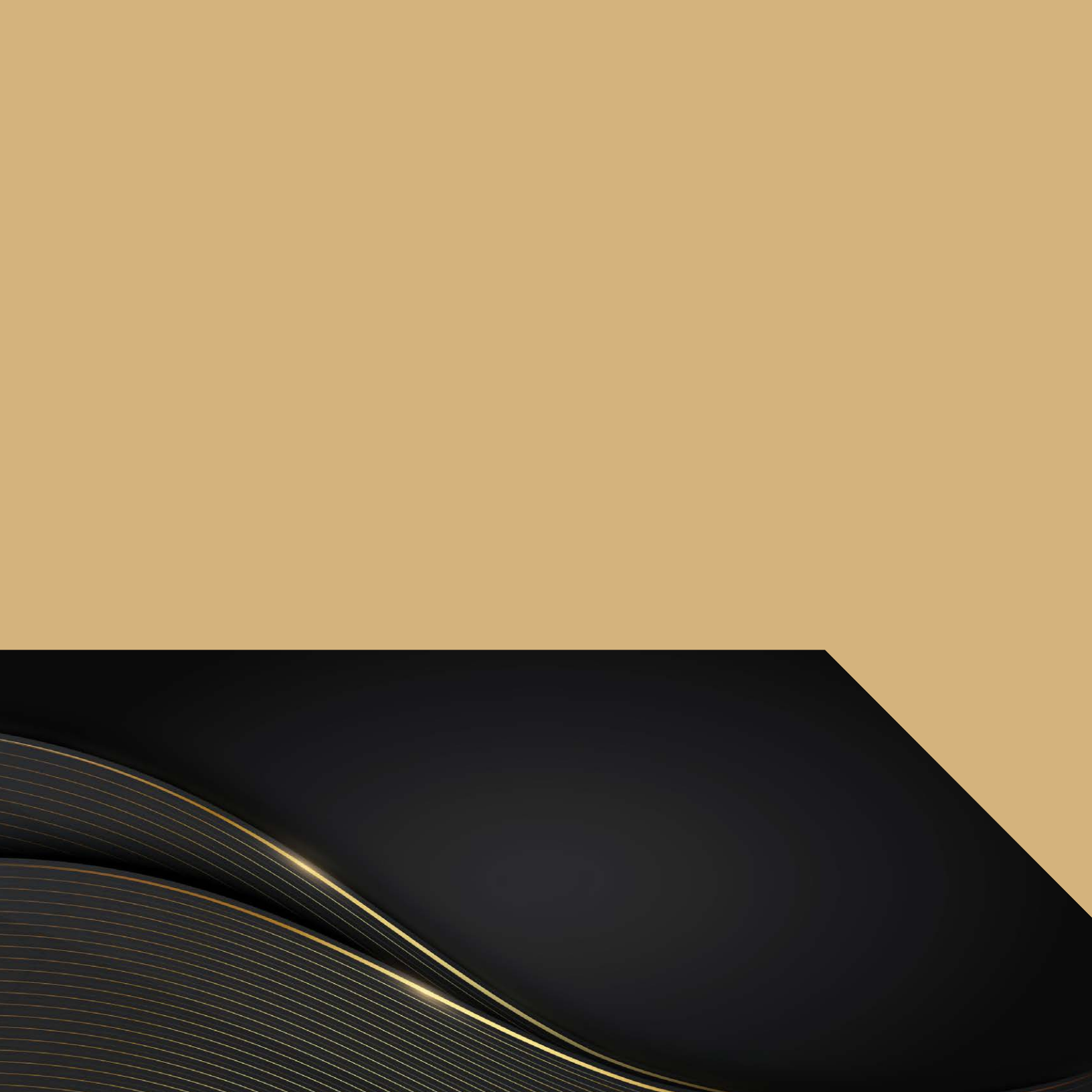
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FELLOWSHIP WEBSITE









*Vanderbilt Eye Institute*