



Fellowship *in* Vitreoretinal Diseases *and* Surgery

VANDERBILT
EYE INSTITUTE

Letter from the Director



Dear Fellowship Applicant,

Congratulations! You have chosen to pursue training in a fantastic field that will challenge and reward you throughout your entire career.

As you embark on this next step in your professional career, take time to reflect on what qualities you value most in a fellowship program. Envision your career as a Retina specialist and make sure the program you choose will equip you with the tools to succeed. At the same time, relish this experience—you are going to meet some amazing people 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.

Edward Cherney, MD, Fellowship Director

Avni Finn, MD, MBA, Associate Fellowship Director



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



Edward 'Ted' Cherney, MD

FELLOWSHIP: Moorfields
Eye Hospital

- Fellowship Program Director
- Ocular Trauma



Avni Finn, MD, MBA

FELLOWSHIP: Duke

- Associate Fellowship Director
- Medical Director of Imaging



Milam Brantley, MD, PhD
FELLOWSHIP: Moorfields
Eye Hospital

- Inherited Retinal Diseases
- Associate Vice Chair for
Faculty Affairs



Edward Chaum, MD, PhD
FELLOWSHIP: Massachusetts
Eye and Ear Infirmary



**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.

POSITIONS • The fellowship alternates between accepting one fellow/year (even years) and two fellows/year (odd years).

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.

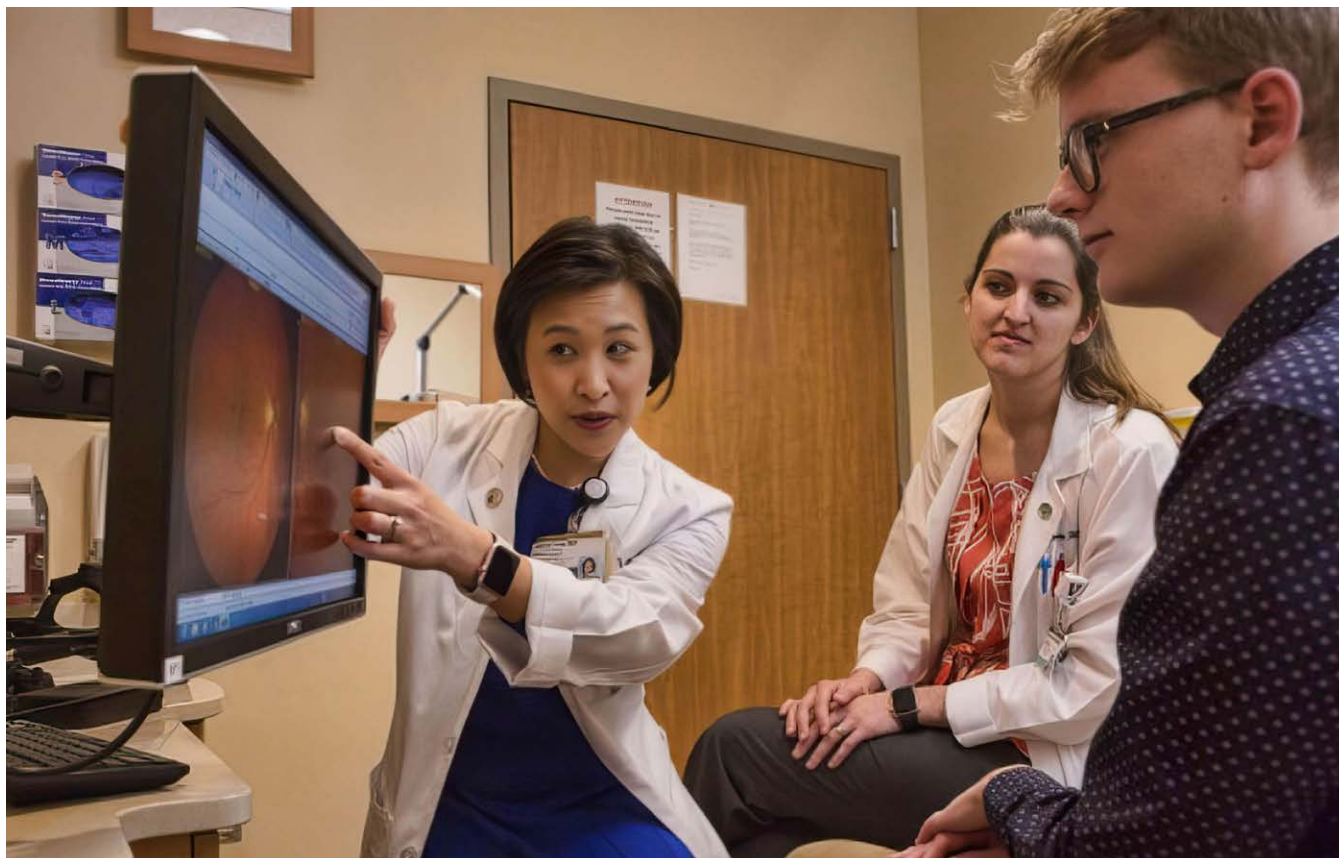
At Vanderbilt, the fellow works with retina faculty in the evaluation and treatment of adult and pediatric patients in the private referral clinics. He/she will participate in clinical diagnosis, treatment planning, office procedures and will assist faculty in the teaching of residents and medical students. 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 Lumera operating microscopes along with the BIOM 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 • The fellow conducts weekly conferences at 7am. The themes of these conferences alternate between medical cases, surgical cases, journal club, and research seminars. Conferences are attended by all Retina division faculty members and provide an invaluable forum to discuss interesting cases and ongoing research. Additionally, the fellow will lead a monthly departmental Imaging Conference, as well as participate in the annual Vanderbilt Pearls CME program attended by regional ophthalmologists.

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



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



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



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

Vanderbilt Retina faculty is active in local, national, and international professional organizations, frequently in leadership positions (*denoted by asterisk*).

American Academy of Ophthalmology*
American Board of Ophthalmology
American Society of Retinal Specialists
Association of Pediatric Retinal Surgeons
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology*
Club Jules Gonin
Club Vit
International Society for Clinical Electrophysiology of Vision
Macula Society*
Nashville Academy of Ophthalmology*
Retina Society
Ronald G. Michels Fellowship Foundation
Society of Heed Fellows*
Tennessee Academy of Ophthalmology
American Uveitis Society

Vanderbilt retina faculty continue to be recognized with numerous honors and awards, including:

AAO Achievement Award
AAO Secretariat Award
AAO Senior Honor Award
AAO Unsung Heroes Award
ARVO Fellows Award
ASRS Honor Award
Best Doctors in America
Heed Ophthalmic Foundation
Knights Templar Eye Foundation Research Award
NEI K08 Clinician-Scientist Career Development Award
Research to Prevent Blindness Special Scholar Award
Retina Society Margherio Award
Retina Society Travel Award
Ronald G. Michels Fellowship Foundation Award
Vanderbilt Eye Institute Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching



Contact Information

Fellowship Director

Edward Cherney, MD
edward.cherney@vumc.org

Associate Fellowship Director

Avni Finn, MD, MBA
avni.finn@vumc.org

Fellowship Coordinator

Lacy Ortiz
Phone: 615.936.0044
lacy.j.ortiz@vumc.org



FELLOWSHIP WEBSITE







Vanderbilt Eye Institute