

GETTING REAL ABOUT RESIDENCY

The Getting Real About Residency workshop is a perennial favorite among YoungMD Connect's members. It addresses a range of topics to help ophthalmology students make informed decisions about their residency training: time-management tactics; strategies for handling academic pressures; leveraging opportunities to stand out on resumes and interviews; and more. Below is a summary of key takeaways from the July 2022 workshop, which featured a panel of leading ophthalmologists at varying stages in their careers who shared their best insights with the next generation of ophthalmic practitioners.

FACULTY

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HOW TO LEAVE RESIDENCY BETTER THAN WHEN YOU STARTED

Dr. Al-Mohtaseb

I approached my residency at Baylor College of Medicine with the mindset that there's always a way to improve things. I initiated what we called the "Baylor Manual" on how to navigate everything from the logistics of clinical sites to the varied expectations of different attending physicians. The manual has grown with each subsequent residency class. When I was an associate program director, I appreciated when a resident proposed a way to improve our processes.

- Be constructive about your feedback; try to present it in a positive light.
- Do not be afraid to try and change things, especially if you have a particular expertise or skill set.
- One way to avoid conflicts with your co-residents is to shift your mindset to one of collaboration—when everyone works together, everyone succeeds.
- It's OK to ask for help. If your program offers therapy, take advantage of it.



HOW TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR COMPETITIVE FELLOWSHIPS

Dr. Berrocal

I am currently the director of the retina fellowship at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Residency is the time to learn what interests you, so explore all the offerings with an open mind. If you can't decide between two subspecialties, approach your attendings and they will help you find the program that fits you best. The important thing is to find a match where you can be successful and happy.

In whatever subspecialty you end up, networking will be vitally important for advancing your career. Find attendings who will review your essays, write your recommendations, and help you get interviews (and who know you well enough to go to bat for you).



HOW TO BE USEFUL IN CLINIC | Dr. Sheybani

In residency, it can feel like you're trying to drink from a fire hydrant. Here are some of the best strategies for navigating your first year:

- Note each attending physician's preferences for charting and process, and pass those notes along to residents who follow you.
- In clinic, pay attention to dress code; respect the rules and dynamics of the space.
- Precharting: always review patient charts for the next clinic day the night before. Knowing the case data thoroughly goes a long way in the faculty clinic.
- Present your case reports in a professional manner, thoroughly but succinctly.
- Document everything you see in the clinic in your patient notes, so your attending physician will know that you noticed the details.
- Devise a treatment plan to show the attending physician your thought process. He or she can either reinforce your strategy or teach you differently.
- I appreciate when a resident demonstrates further learning about a case (e.g., looking up a related published paper and summarizing the findings).
- Residents don't drive patient volume; you are there to learn as much as you can about practicing ophthalmology and devise sound treatment plans. Your speed and volume should increase as you move through residency.
- If you experience a surgical complication while in a subspecialty clinic, be mindful that that patient will likely remain at that practice for years to come (and thus your attendings will be doing the follow-ups). Take note of where the patient's postop appointments are in the schedule, and try to see him or her yourself. This goes a long way toward patient ownership. Eventually, the buck will stop with you, and learning to follow up is excellent training.



CHALLENGES VS. HAPPY MOMENTS

Dr. Ferguson

Being on call: Being on primary call can be stressful, but there is no better way to learn how to triage and discern what is and what is not an ocular emergency. It is daunting when it is new. Lean on your senior residents and don't be afraid to ask for help, because everyone has been in your shoes at some point.

Joining a residency program: The better you work together with co-residents as a team, the more you will enjoy your time there, and the better your patient care will be. Even if you don't spend time with your co-residents outside of the program, be available and offer to help when needed.

Find a secondary interest in ophthalmology beyond clinical care and surgery, such as clinical research, advocacy, or global ophthalmology education, as a way to differentiate yourself.

Gratifying moments: People really cherish their vision. Give yourself permission to celebrate those wins when you've helped someone improve their vision.

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