

Angelo P. Tanna, MD

Dr. Tanna discusses his love of academia and shares his passion for French cuisine and wines.



What has your research on visual impairment in the United States revealed thus far?

Knowing that the changing demographics of the US population will result in an increased prevalence of many common ophthalmic disease processes, including glaucoma, I believe it is important to develop an understanding of whether the advances in eye care of the past decades have had a favorable impact on visual outcomes. By looking at data from two large federal surveys, my colleagues and I demonstrated a marked decline in the age-adjusted prevalence of self-reported visual impairment in the United States from 1984 to 2010. Our results suggest that therapeutic interventions are improving the quality of life and health of the population. Such information is especially important in this era of health care reform.

What led you to pursue a career in academia? Do you ever wish you had gone into private practice?

I had a research internship with the National Institutes of Health in high school, and ever since, I have been drawn to academia. The idea of being surrounded by smart, creative people intent on advancing the frontiers of knowledge and applying new information to the management of disease is thrilling. I remember feeling chills when the late Steven Muller, president of Johns Hopkins University, addressed our class of freshman undergraduates about the importance of the dedication of universities to the creation of new knowledge. Throughout my education and career, my greatest heroes have been scholars at the forefront of discovery in their respective fields. Like any curious person, I have wondered about the possibilities available in private practice, and I have great admiration and respect for many of my colleagues who have chosen that path. I know that I am in the right place to achieve my goals and to be able to most meaningfully contribute.

What lessons do you try to impart to your residents regarding conducting and presenting research?

Regardless of our specialty or whether we are in private practice or academia, as physicians, we must be life-long learners. We must keep up with a massive volume of clinical and translational research to provide the best care to our patients. Unfortunately, flaws in study design, methodology, or analysis mar much of what survives the peer review pro-

FAST FACTS

- Associate professor and vice chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, 2010 to present
- Director of resident research, Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, 1999 to present
- Chairman of the American Glaucoma Society's Bylaws and Strategic Planning Committee, 2010 to 2012
- Member of Prevent Blindness America's Scientific Advisory Committee, 2011 to present
- Member of the American Board of Ophthalmology's Glaucoma Content Outline Rating Committee, 2012
- Recipient of the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Achievement Award, 2009
- Recipient of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine's Outstanding Teacher Award, 2010 to 2011

cess and is published in the scientific literature. Residents' participation in the research process is critical for their development of a firsthand understanding of the limitations of clinical research and the potential for bias and error. On a positive note, however, the opportunity to attend and present at national meetings like the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology affords residents an opportunity to see the vastness and breadth of the international biomedical research enterprise.

Of the awards you have received during your career, is there one of which you are most proud?

I am proud of my service to the American Academy of Ophthalmology and that organization's recognition with its Achievement Award. I believe the Academy is a truly outstanding provider of education to ophthalmologists at every stage in their careers, and I am honored to be a part of that in many different capacities, including my service to *EyeNet Magazine* and the Basic and Clinical Science Course as well as my participation in many of its courses and symposia.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I particularly love French wines and French cuisine, so if I had to choose to live somewhere other than Chicago, it would be in the Burgundy region of France, one of the most important culinary and viticultural centers of the world and home to my favorite wines. ■