

JAY CHHABLANI, MD

What led you to a career as a vitreoretinal specialist?

Ophthalmology was fascinating to me as a young medical student. I was struck by the effect an eye disease could have on a patient's life. As an ophthalmology resident, I was mesmerized by retinal surgery, and I was fascinated by the spectrum of disease and the unique combination of medical and surgical expertise that is needed to be a retina specialist. Emerging therapies and imaging in medical retina are very interesting. Seeing their evolution over the last decade continues to amaze me. Retinal surgery also has changed so much since I started my fellowship in 2007, and I truly enjoy managing complex surgical cases.

You recently reached 500 peer-reviewed publications on PubMed. What motivated you as you strove to reach that milestone?

It's just a number, but the overall journey to reach 500 publications has been rewarding. The motivation to keep moving forward was the evolving imaging techniques, particularly those related to my special interest in the choroid. As we move forward, we have few answers but so many more questions, which is what keeps researchers like me motivated. I am truly thankful to my team, my mentors, and my patients. We still have miles to go.

What interests you most about imaging techniques?

I have a particular interest in choroidal imaging, which has been revolutionized by swept-source OCT. Our group focuses on choroidal biomarkers using volumetric swept-source OCT scans—a few of them are already in clinical practice. Recently, we have been using deep learning techniques to visualize, characterize, and quantify choroidal vessels in a three-dimensional analysis. We have also recently established a novel imaging system—laser Doppler holography—which allows us to visualize choroidal vessels without dye injection. Widefield imaging is becoming more common and with much higher resolution, which is also fascinating. The use of multimodal imaging with image registration in the prediction of disease progression and treatment outcomes is the future.



Figure. Dr. Chhablani and his wife Preeti Patil, MD, a pediatric ophthalmologist, enjoying vacation in North Carolina with their two children, Atharv and Naman.

What has been one of the most memorable moments of your career?

I don't think I can pick one specific moment that is memorable in my career; however, when I look back, it surprises me how life kept taking turns and how everything fell into place. I started my career with minimal interest in research, and a decade later, I have an academic career with an active research profile. I truly feel blessed and grateful to my mentors and my family for always being there for me (Figure).

What is your favorite hobby outside of work?

I love spending time with my family. My wife and I have two young boys (8 and 4), and we love watching hockey games together. I enjoy playing chess and ping pong with my boys and having family movie nights! My wife and I enjoy cooking and traveling together. ■

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