



FIVE QUESTIONS WITH... DAVID R. CHOW, MD

David R. Chow, MD, FRCS(C), is a vitreoretinal surgeon at the Toronto Retina Institute and an assistant professor at the University of Toronto.



1. As a surgeon, who are your heroes?

Surgical innovators who paved the way for advances in techniques and instrumentation! I have been fortunate to train or work with many surgical leaders in our field who have inspired me with their ability to continually innovate and evolve.

George A. Williams, MD; Kirk H. Packo, MD; and Michael T. Trese, MD, all inspired me directly, but I admired Robert Machemer, MD; Eugene de Juan, MD; and Steve Charles, MD, from afar. I have always told my own fellows, "If in 10 years you are still doing the same technique that I first taught you, then I have let you down." The one common quality I feel all great surgeons have is their ability to continually change.

2. What, in your opinion, makes being a retina surgeon in Canada different compared with the United States?

Not fighting for referrals, not being sued (as much), and begging for cutting-edge instrumentation (although I hear that last item is now the same in the United States). We have much more difficulty getting access to OR time, so we have to manage patients with this in mind. We do a lot of pneumatic retinopexy here compared with the United States—and, yes, it does work most of the time!

3. What has been the most exciting technological advancement in retina in the past 15 years?

It's hard to say. There have been so many incremental advances—nothing earth-shattering—but the shift to higher speed cutters, stronger light sources to allow chandeliers and small-gauge surgery, and trocar-cannulas for self-sealing wounds each stand out. The most exciting advance currently under way is the development of digital viewing systems such as Ngenuity (Alcon) to perform surgery. The potential of operating in a digital environment with overlays and previously unheard of surgical feedback could be a game changer over the next 5 years.



4. What do you consider to be your greatest professional achievement?

Another hard one. I think, to others, I am most well-known for the long-term work I have done developing the knowledge base on light source safety, brightness, and visualization. I have enjoyed becoming an expert in this small domain. Personally, I would probably consider my greatest achievement to be training more than 20 fellows who are now making big differences in their home countries.

5. If you were stranded on a desert island, what three things would you want to have with you?

My family, my golf clubs, and my favorite restaurant... Ha! (Pretty well set with that combo.) ■

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