

MEE VITRECTOMY COURSE: A PRIMER FOR NEW FELLOWS



This popular 2-day meeting provides a hands-on introduction to core concepts in vitreoretinal surgery.

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The 15th annual Mass Eye and Ear (MEE) Vitrectomy Course, held July 11-12, 2025, included a great group of 60 fellows and 50 top faculty from across the country (Figure 1). Uniquely positioned at the beginning of the academic year, this popular course offers a comprehensive overview of core surgical concepts for new surgical fellows.

This course has a long legacy of educational innovations through the leadership of previous directors and co-founders John Loewenstein, MD, and Demetrios Vavvas, MD, and honorary founder Dean Elliott, MD. The course is currently led by John B. Miller, MD; Nimesh A. Patel, MD; and Elizabeth J. Rossin, MD, PhD.

DAY 1: FOUNDATIONS IN KNOWLEDGE

The first day of the course consisted of core lectures and panels focused on the fundamentals of vitreoretinal surgery. The course began with an introduction and welcome by Dr. Miller. The initial set of lectures covered core concepts in procedural and surgical management, including the basics of pneumatic retinopexy, scleral buckling, vitrectomy, and intraocular tamponades. Next, Donald J. D'Amico, MD, led a panel on retinal detachment repair, in which Steve Charles, MD; Raymond Iezzi, MD; John W. Kitchens, MD; Carl D. Regillo, MD; and Christina Y. Weng, MD, discussed their approaches to various types of detachments. A second panel, moderated by María H. Berrocal, MD, discussed surgical



Figure 1. The 15th annual MEE Vitrectomy Course welcomed faculty and fellow attendees from across the country.

management of diabetic retinopathy, including the expertise of Royce W. S. Chen, MD; Gerardo Garcia-Aguirre, MD; Deeba Husain, MD; Thanos Papakostas, MD; and Dimitra Skondra, MD, PhD.

Other notable sessions of the afternoon included insightful discussions on ergonomics in the OR by Robert B. Bhisitkul, MD, PhD; management of endophthalmitis by Yewlin E. Chee, MD; approaches to proliferative vitreoretinopathy by Dr. Regillo; use of IOLs by Dr. Kitchens; surgical approaches to epiretinal membranes and macular holes by Katherine E. Talcott, MD, and Dr. Weng; and the basics of pediatric vitreoretinal surgery by Eric Nudelman, MD, PhD.

A highlight of the afternoon was the Founders Lecture, given by Stanley Chang, MD, who pioneered the use of perfluorocarbon liquids in the surgical management of vitreoretinal pathology. He briefly discussed the development of perfluoro-n-octane (PFO) and then presented a variety of cases highlighting situations in which PFO is particularly helpful.

The day finished with a reception for all attendees, followed by a fellows' mixer at the Liberty Hotel, sponsored by YoungMD Connect, and a faculty dinner at Lucia's Ristorante in the Italian North End.

DAY 2: KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

The second day of the course took place at MEE and consisted of lectures, wet and dry labs, and small focus groups. The day commenced with a discussion of surgical uveitis basics by Steven Yeh, MD, followed by a talk by Yannek I. Leiderman, MD, PhD, on how to prepare for surgery; finally, a lively panel led by Dr. Kitchens discussed secondary IOLs and featured Mohammad Dahrouj, MD, PhD; Miin (Irene) Roh, MD, PhD; Archana T. Seethala, MD; Andre J. Witkin, MD; Jeremy D. Wolfe, MD; and Thomas Wubben, MD, PhD. After, the fellows divided into smaller groups to attend the wet and dry labs as well as the surgical case discussion and career-mentoring groups.

The wet lab stations, set up in the MEE ORs, offered one-on-one teaching on the basics of vitrectomy (Figure 2), scleral buckling techniques (Figure 3), intraocular foreign body removal, and membrane peeling using both pig and model eyes. These stations allowed fellows to gain essential surgical skills and introduced them to a variety of vitrectomy systems, including the Alcon Unity and Constellation, the Zeiss Eva Nexus, and the Bausch + Lomb Stellaris, as well as different viewing platforms, such as the Bausch + Lomb SeeLuma, the Alcon Ngenuity, and the Oculus Biom with the Zeiss microscope.

The dry lab took place in the state-of-the-art Altschuler surgical training lab. Fellows practiced surgical techniques on several virtual simulators, such as the EyeSi (Haag-Streit) and the Genentech Virtual Simulation system, and were introduced to intravitreal and suprachoroidal injectables,



Figure 2. A fellow performed vitrectomy under the guidance of Drs. Maria and Audina Berrocal.



Figure 3. Drs. Chee and Seethala taught scleral buckling techniques.

including the triamcinolone acetonide injectable suspension (Xipere, Bausch + Lomb), the 0.19 mg fluocinolone acetonide intravitreal implant (Iluvien, Ani), and the dexamethasone intravitreal implant (Ozurdex, Abbvie). The newly announced Alcon Unipexy was also featured in the dry lab.

In addition to gaining hands-on experience, fellows attended surgical case discussions where they learned about approaches to complex cases from experienced faculty members. Fellows also participated in small groups led by faculty who offered career mentoring. The small groups provided excellent teaching and mentoring opportunities while also fostering connections between fellows and faculty from across the country.

Several panels were interspersed among the sessions. In addition to Dr. Kitchens' secondary IOL panel, Dr. Elliott moderated a panel on approaches to proliferative vitreoretinopathy, in which Tedi Begaj, MD; Xi Chen, MD, PhD; Dilraj Grewal, MD; Sandra R. Montezuma, MD; Flavio A. Rezende, MD, PhD; and Frances Wu, MD, contributed. Rishi P. Singh, MD, discussed approaches to macular hole repair

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with Audina M. Berrocal, MD; Jonathan S. Chang, MD; Jose R. Davila, MD; Dan A. Gong, MD; Mrinali Gupta, MD; and Ines Maria De Carvalho Lains, MD, PhD.

The day concluded with a reception and dinner at the Hampshire House in the Back Bay. During the event, Robert C. Gentile, MD, delivered the final talk, “Top 10 Things to Keep Your Attending AND YOU Happy!”—a humorous reminder of common pet peeves and useful advice to fellows on developing good habits in the clinic and the OR.

FELLOWS READY TO SUCCEED

The 15th annual MEE Vitrectomy Course was a resounding success. It gave the fellows a comprehensive introduction to vitreoretinal surgery by focusing on core concepts and offering hands-on lab sessions to build surgical skills. This course equipped fellows with the foundational knowledge and tools necessary to begin their training with success, while also encouraging meaningful connections with faculty and peers across different institutions.

We look forward to next year’s top-notch educational offerings at the 16th annual MEE Vitrectomy Course, set for July 10-11, 2026! ■

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