

Seenu M. Hariprasad, MD

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1. What do you enjoy most about working as a vitreo-retinal surgeon in an academic institution?

Academia is a dynamic environment that offers endless opportunities. I teach residents and fellows, conduct clinical research, care for patients, work with wonderful colleagues in various specialties at our hospital, and participate in high-level interactions with several device and pharmaceutical companies. I also enjoy presenting at conferences in the United States and around the world. Furthermore, the vitreoretinal fellowship program, which I head, is my pride and joy and the highlight of the retina service. I think it is the breadth of things that I am involved in that makes academia an enjoyable atmosphere in which to work.

2. You were promoted to Associate Professor and named Chief of the Vitreoretinal Service early in your career. What advice do you have for residents and fellows considering a career in academic ophthalmology or vitreoretinal surgery?

Academia is a wonderful, exciting, and challenging career path. The key to success is the ability to multitask. This is a vital skill. One needs to balance his or her personal life with a busy clinical practice and research endeavors. Additionally, being a part of an academic community requires one to serve on various university and hospital committees. In order to be promoted you must publish, conduct research, be productive clinically, give lectures, and teach. Furthermore, the changing face of academics requires us to also be productive financially. Therefore, my best advice would be to understand the need to juggle many balls and not allow any one of them to drop.

3. What are the positive aspects of practicing vitreo-retinal surgery?

As the Director of our Vitreoretinal Fellowship program, I understand how competitive this field is and I feel privileged to be a vitreoretinal surgeon. In my opinion, this field possesses many positives. For example, I have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of my patients on a daily basis. Many patients have severe blinding diseases. The tools we have today can help patients with wet age-related macular degeneration or a severe diabetic eye disease

more so than ever before. As a vitreoretinal surgeon, I deal with the most innovative pharmacologic interventions, the finest surgical devices, and breathtaking imaging technologies. Furthermore, our field is a dynamic one. The way that we manage many retinal diseases has changed considerably from the time I finished my fellowship in 2005 at the Barnes Retina Institute in St. Louis. Look at microincisional vitrectomy surgery (MIVS), for instance. MIVS was introduced to my fellowship in 2005. We debated the role of this technology, as 20-gauge vitrectomy was the gold standard. Now—in just 4 years—I perform 23-gauge MIVS in more than 90% of my cases. Another positive is the vitreoretinal community. The colleagues that I work with in my department, nationally, and internationally are one of a kind. I have never seen another field in medicine filled with such personality and talent.



4. What do you enjoy about being on the editorial board of the American Journal of Ophthalmology?

I have been on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Ophthalmology* (AJO) for 2 years. Thomas J. Liesegang, MD, the editor of the AJO, extended this privilege to me. Working under Dr. Liesegang's leadership and working with my co-editors on the editorial board have been a very positive experiences. The AJO is a high-impact, competitive journal, and I take great pleasure in reviewing the best science and enjoy the process of choosing the finest manuscripts for publication. I also like being involved in AJO-affiliated projects, such as recommending topics for the Editorial or Perspectives sections and nominating individuals for the Jackson Memorial Award.

5. What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

Nothing gives me greater happiness than spending time with my beautiful wife, Jaya, of 14 years, and our two little angels, Anya, 7, and Ishani, 5. One of our favorite family activities is riding our bikes together up and down Lake Michigan on Lake Shore Drive, which is just two blocks from our house in Hyde Park. Additionally, the highlight of my day is dropping my daughters off at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, which is next door to where I work. ■