A Career in Ophthalmology in the West Midlands
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What is Ophthalmology?

Ophthalmology is a branch of medicine dealing with the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases of the eye and visual system.
Ophthalmologists

- Highly skilled doctors with > 7yrs of postgraduate training
- Both physician and surgeon
- Manage a wide range of conditions including cataract, glaucoma macular degeneration, squint, eyelid, corneal and retinal pathology
  - Diseases of the eye may be part of an underlying systemic disease such as diabetes mellitus
  - Close collaboration with many other specialists including diabetologists, rheumatologists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, ENT & maxillofacial surgeons, plastic surgeons, paediatricians and geneticists
Ophthalmologists

• Multi skilled in clinical procedures including laser treatment, outpatient interventions, minor oculoplastic procedures and a vast array of specialised ophthalmic operations

“Did you know that Ophthalmologists also examine and treat eye conditions in premature babies?”
Not Just Cataract Surgery!

Ophthalmologists usually specialise in one or more subspecialty areas

- Cataract & Refractive Surgery
- Cornea & External Diseases
- Glaucoma
- Inflammatory Eye Disease, Uveitis & Scleritis
- Medical Ophthalmology
- Medical Retina
- Neuro-ophthalmology
- Ocular Oncology
- Oculoplastics
- Orbital/lacrimal disorders
- Paediatric Ophthalmology
- Strabismus
- Vitreoretinal surgery
Equipment We Use
Ophthalmic Treatments

- Most ophthalmologists have 2 operating sessions a week
- Undertake procedures using different types of laser or surgery, mostly performed under local anaesthesia and as a day case
- Ophthalmic surgery includes:
  - Cataract surgery
  - Squint and glaucoma surgery
  - Oculoplastic surgery
  - Intraocular injections for macular degeneration
  - Retinal surgery
  - Laser treatments
Ophthalmic Treatments

• Cataract surgery is the most common operation in the NHS

“Did you know that in England over 300,000 cataract operations are performed every year under the NHS using a small incision (key hole) surgery known as phacoemulsification”
Eye Emergencies

- Daytime and on-call duties involve managing numerous eye emergencies that present everyday.
  - Most hospitals have their own Eye A & E (or urgent care clinics)
- Presentations vary from a simple corneal foreign body, chemical burns, angle-closure glaucoma, retinal vascular disorders, retinal detachments and eye trauma.
  - Even patients with brain tumours may first present to an eye casualty department
- Consultant Ophthalmologists take part in an on-call rota but night work is unusual.
Why did you choose to be an Ophthalmologist?

“I became an ophthalmologist because it allowed me to blend medicine and surgery in a highly technical environment and in a discipline that is evolving”

“I wanted the challenge of learning new skills and knowledge, and the satisfaction of highly effective treatments”

“Lower levels of night work, good career prospects and no requirement to initially train in general surgery were also factors in choosing this speciality”
## Typical Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Review of ward in-patients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Medical Retina clinic - You see a young patient with advanced diabetic retinopathy, and arrange urgent laser treatment and intraocular injections to prevent the risk of blindness. The patient is grateful for saving her eyesight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Pre op ward round for afternoon theatre list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Theatre - You operate on Mrs B’s right eye. She has dense cataract in both eyes and has been struggling to look after her grandchildren. Surgery is uncomplicated and Mrs B goes home a short while later. Next day, you get a message from Mrs B saying that she is overjoyed with her vision and she can see her grandchildren clearly for the first time in a number of years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>On call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do ophthalmologists work in a team?

Other health professionals play an important role in the care of ophthalmic patients, and teamwork is essential to ophthalmic practice.

- Hospital Doctors and GP’s
- Ophthalmic Nurses
- Orthoptists
  - Assess problems relating to eye movements and binocular vision
- Optometrists
  -Prescribe and dispense spectacles and contact lenses
- Electrophysiologists
  - Provide electrodiagnostic and monitoring services for patients with inherited retinal diseases or visual pathway disorders
Do ophthalmologists work in a team?

• Visual Function Technicians
  - Carry out a number of investigations including visual field tests, B-scan ultrasound, optical coherence tomography and tomographic imaging of the optic nerve

• Ocular Prosthetists
  - Responsible for the supply & fitting of ocular and oculofacial prosthesis

• Ophthalmic Photographers
  - Photographic (including angiographic) and video techniques are essential in the diagnosis and monitoring of many ophthalmic disorders
Advantages & Disadvantages

✓ Rewarding career
✓ Mix of medical and surgical
✓ Own Royal College which looks after our interests
✓ Many areas to subspecialise
✓ Run through training
✓ Work as part of a team
✓ Good work / life balance
✓ Quiet night on-calls
✓ Private Practice

✗ Can be long busy days
✗ Competitive
✗ Increasing demand for services with stretched resources
Career Pathway

Following two years foundation year training, doctors can apply for competitive run-through training in ophthalmology.

• National Recruitment at ST1 level
• Selection process includes portfolio assessment, interviews / assessments at multiple stations
• Usually about 90 training posts per year across the UK
• 7 year run-through training which is competency-based and leads to a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT)
Career Pathway

Phases of training:

- Basic level
  - ST1-2 (two years)

- Intermediate level
  - ST3-4 (two years)

- Higher level
  - ST5-6 (two years)

- Advanced level
  - ST7 (one year in an area of subspecialty interest)
Career Pathway

Academic Ophthalmologists:

- A clinical academic pathway established through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR):
  - Academic clinical Fellowships (ACF)
  - Clinical Lecturerships (CL)
- ACFs are usually ST1-3 level and provide a clinical and academic training environment to prepare an application for a training fellowship leading to a PhD (or equivalent).
- CL’s are aimed at trainees who are advanced in their specialty training, have completed a research doctorate or equivalent and show outstanding potential for continuing a career in academic medicine.
Examination Structure

• Part 1 FRCOphth
  - No previous experience in ophthalmology is required to sit Part 1
  - Covers the learning outcomes of the first two years of training
  - Must Pass by end of the second year of training

• The Refraction certificate
  - Practical exam
  - Must Pass by the end of the third year of training

• Part 2 FRCOphth
  - Written Component - 180 single answer from 4, MCQ paper
  - Oral Component - Structured viva and clinical examination
  - Must be passed by Year 7 in Ophthalmic Specialist Training

• Final Accreditation is achieved when all the competencies are achieved and the Part 2 FRCOphth is passed
Personal Qualities

Click link to view personal specification
## Competition Ratios – 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Applications received</th>
<th>Posts Available</th>
<th>Competition Ratio (Applicants per post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCS Emergency Medicine</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaesthetics (including ACCS Anaesthetics)</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Based Training</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiothoracic Surgery</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Radiology</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Sexual and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Medical Training (including ACCS Acute Medicine)</td>
<td>2832</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Psychiatry Training</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Surgical Training</td>
<td>1396</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Practice</td>
<td>5112</td>
<td>3612</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histopathology</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetrics and Gynaecology</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ophthalmology</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.94</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgery</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paediatrics</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16308</strong></td>
<td><strong>8545</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commitment to Specialty

• Taster week
• Prizes: e.g. Duke Elder
• **Microsurgical Skills course**
• Regional Events:
  o [Midland Ophthalmological Society](#)
  o [Regional Postgraduate Ophthalmology Teaching](#)
  o West Midlands Trainee Research Network
• [National Ophthalmmic Trainee Group Symposium](#)
• Audit
• Research / publications
• Teaching
• Medical student SSA
• Logbook : Skills / procedures / interesting cases
• Part 1 FRCOphth
Why the West Midlands?

- One of the largest regions in the country
- Training programme has posts in hospitals in:
  - Birmingham, Burton-on-Trent,
  - Coventry
  - Dudley
  - Hereford
  - Sandwell
  - Shrewsbury
  - Stoke-on-Trent
  - Wolverhampton
Why the West Midlands?

- Great chance to visit some of these cities and experience each region’s attractions
  - Ironbridge Gorge (UNESCO World Heritage Site) - Birthplace of the industrial revolution
  - Staffordshire Potteries
  - Bordering the peak district national park
  - 5 areas of outstanding national Beauty
    - Wye Valley
    - Shropshire Hills
    - Cannock Chase
    - Malvern Hills
    - Parts of Cotswolds

- Birthplace of William Shakespeare in Stratford upon Avon
Where to go for more information…

• Royal College of Ophthalmologists
  - Training
  - A career in Ophthalmology
• Health Education England, West Midlands
• National Ophthalmology Recruitment
• NHS health careers
• JRCPTB specialty page and curriculum
• ST3 Recruitment
• RCP (London), Specialty spotlight