

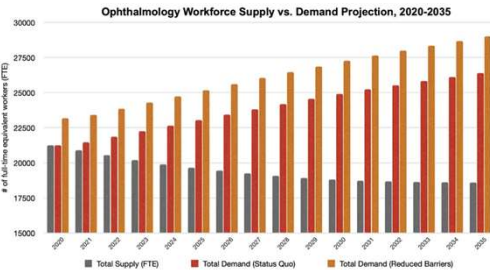
/

What Retina Fellows Look for in a Practice

Alex Melamud MD, MA
Ghassan Ghorayeb MD

Ophthalmology Workforce Projections in the United States, 2020 to 2035

Sean T. Berkowitz, MD, MBA, Amit P. Finn, MD, MBA, Ravi Parkhi, MD, MPH, Ajay E. Kurtyan, MD, MS, Shiji Patel, MD, MBA
Published September 20, 2023 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.optha.2023.09.018>



Ophthalmology Shows Major Shift Toward Practice Consolidation

By Lauren Jarem, MS
Selected by Russell N. Van Gelder, MD, PhD

Journal Highlights
Ophthalmology, September 2023

In recent years, many areas of medicine have shifted away from private practice in favor of affiliations with larger medical groups. In this retrospective, cross-sectional study, **Smith et al.** set out to uncover whether ophthalmology in the United States is following similar trends. Their findings revealed not only significant declines in the number of ophthalmologists working in smaller practices but also an increasing proportion of larger ophthalmology practices versus smaller ones across the United States.

/

Panelists

- **Ahsan Hussain**
 - Boston University, 2nd year retina fellow
- **Clayton Kirk**
 - Associated Retina Consultants (Phoenix, AZ), 2nd year retina fellow
- **Sam Subramanian**
 - Loma Linda University, 2nd year retina fellow
- **Jan Singaravelu**
 - Retina Group of Washington, 2nd year retina fellow

Respondent Demographics: Age/Gender

- 25 surgical retina fellows responded to the survey
- Average age 33.8 years (range 31-37 years)

68% Male

Female 32%

84% 2nd Year

1st Year 16%

Respondent Demographics: Ethnicity/Family Status

How do you identify yourself (check all that apply)?
25 responses

African American/Black 0 (0%)

Asian 12 (48%)

Caucasian 12 (48%)

Hispanic/Latino 0 (0%)

Prefer not to answer 1 (4%)

Married 80%

Not married 20%

No children 68%

Yes children 32%

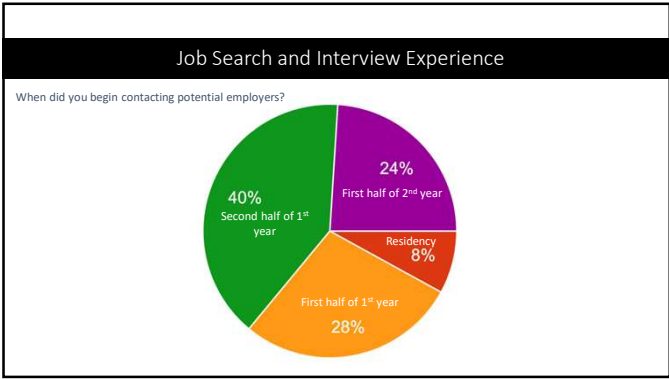
Job Search

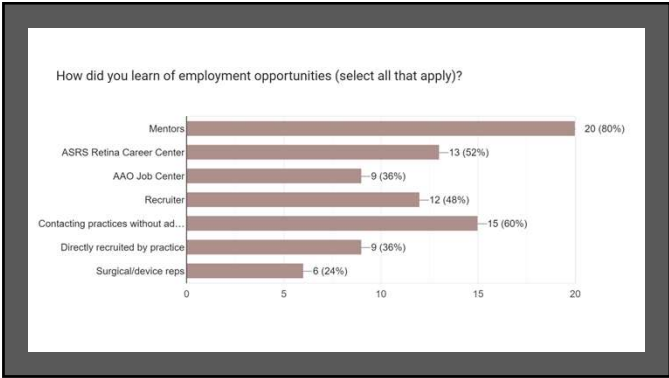


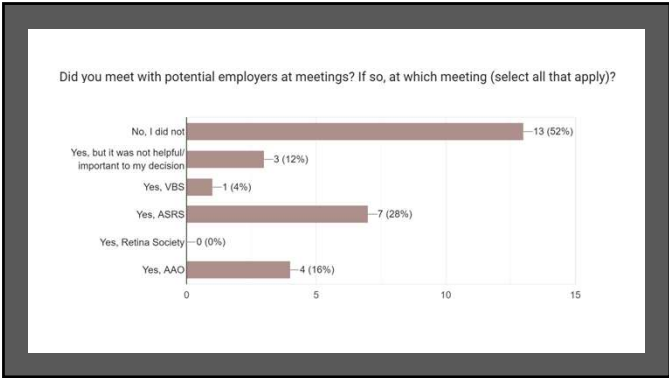
When did you begin contacting potential employers?

How did you learn of employment opportunities?

Did networking at meetings play a significant role in your job search?







Interview Experience


Chosen as #1 Most important:

- Observing physician staff interactions and workflow in clinic/OR
- Dinner with physicians in practice

Rank order of aspects of job interview (Most to Least Important)

1. Observing physician staff interactions and workflow in clinic/OR
2. Dinner with physicians in practice
3. Meeting with business or clinic manager
4. After hours tour of clinic and OR facilities
5. Time to explore city
6. Virtual/Zoom interview
7. Being "wined & dined"
8. Meeting with realtor

Deciding on a Job?



What was the most important factor in choosing your future employment?

What factors influence job choice?

The Top 5 (Most important):

1. Practice culture/fit
2. Clinic/OR infrastructure and support (e.g. scribe and ancillary staff)
3. Proximity to family/support system
4. Partnership compensation
5. Call schedule/ after-hours cases/ lifestyle

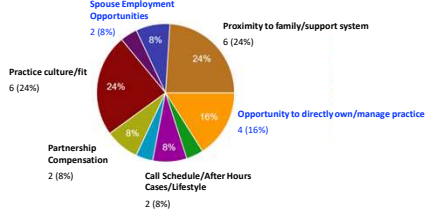
The Bottom 5 (Least important):

20. Opportunities for leadership within group and national subspecialty organizations
21. Ability to pursue subspecialty interest (e.g. peds, uveitis, onc)
22. Teaching opportunities
23. Research opportunities
24. Educational debt

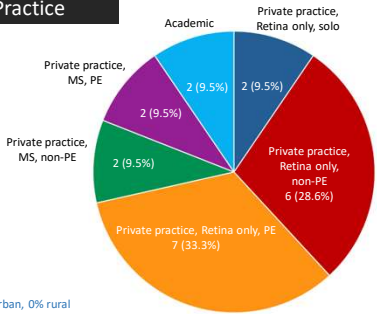
The middle...

- (Most to Least Important)
6. Partnership track length
 7. Patient volume
 8. Mentorship from senior partners
 9. Opportunity to own/ directly manage practice
 10. Endorsement of practice from mentors
 11. Number of surgical cases
 12. Proximity to major metro
 13. Spouse employment opportunities
 14. Associate compensation
 15. Endorsement of practice from peers/current fellows
 16. Surgical equipment/vitrectomy system
 17. Cost of living
 18. Non-compete terms
 19. Prestige of practice

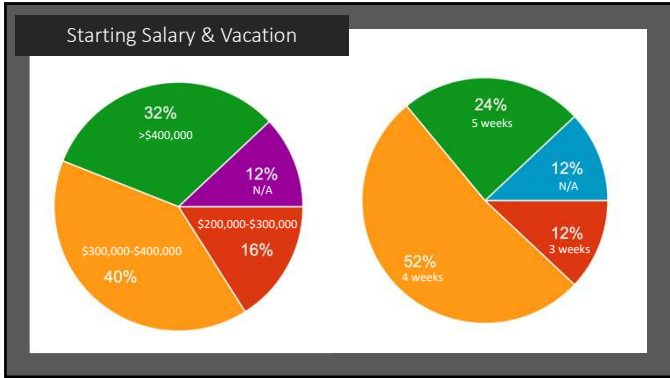
What is/was the #1 most IMPORTANT or LIMITING factor when choosing a job?
25 responses



Type of Practice



50% urban, 50% suburban, 0% rural



What Can Practices Do to Effectively To Recruit Fellows?

- Reach out to faculty of fellowship programs to have them mention the opening to their fellows (x2)
- Offer competitive starting salary, partnership track and autonomy
- Be candid and honest about expectations, salary, partnership opportunities. Show them the workflow and the OR
- Transparency, good faith dealing
- Be honest and upfront, especially as it comes to practice structure, associate expectations and financials
- 1) Offer true future partnership (i.e., physician ownership / no private equity, 2) model prioritizing patient care in the face of administrative/financial pressures
- Get to know them and determine if their vision and culture fits well. Multiple touch points (text, call, zoom, in person interviews, meet up at meetings, etc) Help towards building a relationship. Be very straightforward and transparent and not play games.

What Can Practices Do to Effectively To Recruit Fellows?

- 1) It is important to be up front about compensation- associate compensation and more importantly income potential as a partner. This is very important but often difficult to ask as the interviewee. I most appreciated when practices brought this topic up early and were clear about overall compensation.
- 2) Be transparent about volume / overhead / partnership track /non-competes etc.
- Based on my experiences I appreciated:
 - (1) Opportunities to talk to both associates and partners
 - (2) Showing genuine interest and being organized with lodging/transportation/scheduling
 - (3) Tours of both OR and clinic as well as intro to staff
 - (4) Shadowing a day in clinic and in OR
 - (5) Offer fellows a realtor who can take them around the city for a couple hours
 - (6) Talking to business managers
 - (7) Sample weekly schedule

What Are Fellows Looking for in a Job?

- Scribes. Scribes. I'll say it again: scribes.
- Work-life balance
- Degree of administrative burden
- Benefits (health, maternity/paternity leave, etc.)
- 1) income potential 2) practice culture/fit 3) career growth (i.e. partnership opportunity, practice expansion, etc.) 3) good support staff/clinic flow 3) efficiency of the practice 4) personal fit (city/family/etc.)
- Growth and fair compensation/opportunity
- 1) work-life balance in terms of number of work days per week, number of vacation weeks, etc.
2) Opportunities for hobbies/outside interests in the general location of the practice
- To be surrounded by like-minded individuals that you can see yourself working well with

Questions?
