

## Young Ophthalmologists : Hard Decisions

Ashish Agarwal MS

Joy of passing postgraduate examination is a feeling which cannot be described. The young doctor is elated almost to the point of euphoria. If post-graduation is done in terminal branches like Ophthalmology, hard and brain draining decisions are soon to be made. Numerous factors are to be considered before embarking on the journey of your chosen branch. They may be personal or professional. Having gone through same phase of life I would like to pen down some of my experiences, which might be of some help to you.



### Your Better Half

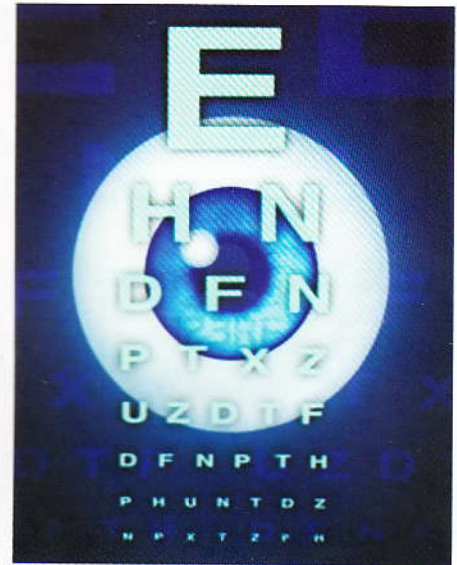
By the time post-graduation is done, most of us get married. If she is a non-medico many of the decisions become simple. She can be with you all the time. Her job at times could be a bit of concern, but it could be managed. If she is a medico of a different branch, both of you really have to sit down and discuss.

Things like place to settle (parents might also be interested), financial investments (ours is one of the costliest branch) and kids too! I was fortunate to have an ophthalmologist as my wife. This made things much simpler.

Pakhi Eye Care Centre  
Kanpur

DOS: 20-12-2012. Revised Manuscript Accepted: 02-04-2013

Investments were halved, we could work at same place, and we were even given preference over other candidates in interviews.



### Job or Fellowship

Ours being a terminal branch and, that to surgical, we have to make a crucial decision. To go for fellowship or to go for a job. This dilemma is more if post-graduation is done from a college, where no surgical expertise is given. Unfortunately this is the condition in almost all of our medical colleges.

Jobs like senior residency in metro cities or Eye Care Centres lure us. These definitely give us financial support. After joining these places you learn that, if you do not have expert surgical hand, you are treated like a first year student. You get a decent salary, good office to sit into but almost no or minimal surgical work. This gradually leads to frustration.

What I suggest, before jumping into these setups you go for a fellowship or join a place where surgical expertise can be earned. For this purpose many good charitable hospitals are there, which could be joined (although salary and living conditions might not be to



your satisfaction). These two or three years of hardship will definitely help you in later life.

### Job or Private Practice

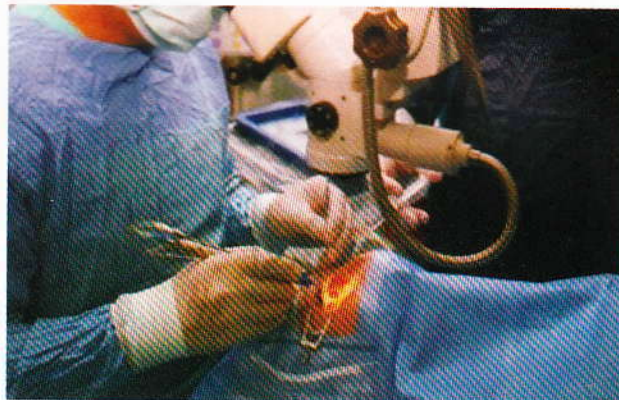
This is a million dollar question, of which till date I am yet to find an answer. Both of prospects have their own merits and demerits. This issue is to be discussed only if you have a decent surgical hand.

First I would like to talk about the easy thing. After having sufficient surgical skill, it's the easiest way out. Just drop in your resume at different well to do eye centres (be it charitable or corporate). Salary these days is not a problem in majority of centres, if you are proficient in your field. They even are at par in majority of centres with usual perks like accommodation (in small cities). There is not much liability on your shoulders & you work peacefully. You would be given sufficient (read more than) amount of work, long working hours and holidays which your family could easily count on fingers. The problem doesn't end here.

First you would certainly not get this type of paying job in your own city, even if you get, there would be many boundations. You are working under a person/trustee who definitely would not want you to have your own identity in his hospital, which he has brought up by many years of hard work. There will always be a conflict of an employee and an employer. After spending two to three crucial years, you might realize that you could not go on like this and decide to move on. Now what?? By this time you might be having kids. Going to another place

for a job will not be easy this time. Your parents (if you have to support them) will be mad at you.

Now either you compromise or take much harder decision to set up your own practice.



Starting a private practice is not an easy task. Foremost thing which comes to mind is financial backup. Ours is one of the costliest branches to set up, if you want to have a decent one.

If you are born with a silver spoon, this is not a major issue and in fact private practice will be one of the best options to consider. You have to compete with you colleagues and you would in middle of sea, full of giant big shots of your city. You can get attached to various hospitals in your city or work part time. Having a decent practice will take almost five to seven years of hard work.

Other prospect is that of a group practice. This would greatly reduce your investments and would increase the range of work that can be done on your Centre. The partners should preferably of different field to avoid clash of interests.



*Income tax was first introduced in world in England  
in 1799 by British Prime Minister William Pitt.*