

"Ophthalmology is one of the few specialisms where you can see the effects of treatment almost immediately."

Kavita has always been interested in being a doctor and wanted to specialise in an area that she found fascinating and would keep her on her toes.

Kavita Aggarwal

Specialty trainee in ophthalmology

Employer or university

John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford



How I got into the role

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My degree in medicine was very interesting and I enjoyed taking a wide range of modules and learning about the different branches of medicine available.

Ophthalmology was one of the modules I took at university and I attended a series of taster weeks to learn more about it. Ophthalmology appealed to me because it combines medicine and microsurgery and is also one of the few specialisms where you can see the effects of treatment almost immediately and make a big impact on patients' lives.

In my first foundation year as a junior doctor, I was able to work in vascular and upper GI surgery, cardiology and geriatrics. I enjoyed my rotations but I knew that these were not

the areas of medicine I wanted to specialise in.

As time went on, I completed my elective ^[1] in ophthalmology to experience it in a rural setting and I eventually worked in ophthalmology in a foundation job. After gaining an understanding of the day-to-day duties of the role, I knew I had found the area of medicine that I wanted to specialise in.

What I do

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On a typical day, I am involved in running the eye casualty department. This involves assessing patients who have acute eye conditions, taking their history, performing a clinical examination and treating them appropriately. I take referrals from A&E, GPs and opticians and I am involved in deciding the order of treatment of patients. I am also able to attend and assist in theatre sessions within the outpatient clinics.

As a junior doctor, I present interesting cases that I've seen at the weekly departmental teaching sessions. I enjoy working as part of a multidisciplinary team and I get to learn so much from my supervisors and seniors.

The best bits and challenges

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I love my role and how my field is constantly evolving because of emerging gadgets and research. I enjoy working with the patients and assessing them; the clinical challenge each patient poses means that no two days are ever the same.

Life outside work

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Outside of work, I have a wide range of interests, most notably travelling. Having recently returned from Australia, New Zealand and Japan, I enjoy learning new things and

immersing myself in different cultures. I also regularly play football and badminton to keep myself fit. These ensure that I have a balanced and healthy lifestyle which I promote to my patients.

Career plans and top tips for others

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To anyone considering a career in ophthalmology, I would say go for it! It's a great speciality with a diverse range of patients. It's also a rewarding role especially because we help patients improve their quality of life in such a huge way.

I'd also suggest that before applying for the specialty, you spend some time with your local ophthalmologists so that you can better understand their workload.

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Elective>