



Lisa G. Wohl, M.D. Ophthalmology

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Area(s) of specialization: Comprehensive ophthalmology, specializing in cataracts and glaucoma

Greatest medical advance in your area of specialization: The greatest medical advance in my career is in the area of cataract surgery. When I started my residency, patients had to go into the hospital the night before cataract surgery and stayed in the hospital for three days after. We didn't have artificial lenses to take the place of the cataract we removed, so patients had to wear thick coke-bottle glasses after surgery and there were many surgical complications. Now, everything is done outpatient, and with new bifocal intraocular lens implants, about 80 percent of patients don't need any glasses post-operatively! The rate of complications is very small also with our modern techniques.

How has practice of medicine changed in your career? The field of ophthalmology has changed significantly since I have been in practice. We have made huge progress in the treatment of serious eye diseases such as glaucoma and macular degeneration. In addition, the area of refractive surgery is a relatively new one, and is constantly evolving, to enable us to allow people to see without the need for glasses or contact lenses. Finally, everything is much more specialized than it used to be. When I started in practice, I used to do everything from muscle surgery on children to removing large eyelid tumors. Now there are at least eight subspecialty areas in ophthalmology, such as pediatric ophthalmology and oculo-plastics that perform those types of procedures.

What inspires you to do what you do? I get tremendous satisfaction on a daily basis from helping people to regain their sight. It is a major quality of life issue...for many elderly people, sight is one of the few senses that can be completely restored enabling them to function independently and enjoy their life.

Community Involvement: Vice President Medical Staff
Adventist GlenOaks Hospital

First Job: I ran the candy counter at the Grove Theater in Elgin. It was the best job I ever had because I could eat all the free popcorn I wanted and get my friends and family in free to any movie.

Pet Peeve: My major pet peeve is for people who take their sight for granted, so they don't come in for regular check-ups to identify potentially treatable blinding eye conditions, like glaucoma and people who lose sight because they have not followed treatment recommendations for diseases already diagnosed such as diabetes or glaucoma.

Proudest Accomplishment: I was one of the first ophthalmologists to wear myself and fit my patients with Corneal Refractive Therapy (CRT) lenses. These are specially designed contact lenses that are worn at night to gently temporarily reshape the cornea and enable the user to see in the daytime without glasses. In 2005 I was named the Practitioner of the Year by Paragon, manufacturer of CRT lenses. I have been invited to teach other ophthalmologists about these lenses at several national meetings.

Most valuable lesson you have learned in your career: The most valuable lesson that I have learned in my career is that medicine is an ever-evolving art, and that one has to always be open-minded about learning new techniques and treatments to be able to always offer the best for our patients.

Person You Most Admire: That's any easy one... it is my father, who was a solo practitioner of orthopedic surgery in Elgin for thirty years. He was very caring physician and a wonderful role model. My father had to leave many holiday dinners to fix someone in the emergency department and never complained about it.

What advice would you offer others considering a career in medicine? If you want to be successful in medicine, you should be prepared to work and study hard, and do it because you truly want to be a caretaker and not just go into it for the financial rewards. It is wonderful that medicine nowadays is so diverse, that there is a place for individuals with many different interests and personalities.