

YONO Committee Tool-Kit

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Neuro-Ophthalmology in a Private Practice Setting

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Most Ophthalmologists would agree that the decision to go into Ophthalmology was a decision to choose an intricately involved surgical field with a precise focus and an enormous scope of practice. Ophthalmology stands alone as a unique surgical specialty that, from a purely territorial sense, enables us, as eye surgeons, a certain comfort. Our turf remains ours and ours alone, with minimal exception, at least, surgically speaking.

That being said, the decision to specialize in two separate fields of Ophthalmology, Neuro-Ophthalmology and Oculoplastics, involved a calculated thought process that took into direct consideration my end career goal. These are the questions I asked myself when considering these two fellowships:

1. Do I enjoy these fields?
2. Can these fields be intellectually and surgically stimulating?
3. Can these fields be monetarily profitable?
4. Will I gain knowledge that will put me into a niche position that will therefore give me an edge on employment opportunities?

My ability to answer yes to these questions reaffirmed to me my desire to pursue both fellowships. In doing so, I was able to gain unique opportunities into a very competitive job market that otherwise would not have been available to me with one specialization alone. Oculoplastics is an extremely competitive field, and practice opportunities in geographically desirable locations are both limited and highly sought after. Given the intellectual nature of the specialty, Neuro-Ophthalmology lends itself to an academic setting, involving the educational aspect for physicians in training, and oftentimes more limited reimbursement opportunity. The marriage of both specialties not only adds to one's knowledge base and surgical skill subset, but also additionally confers advantage when seeking private practice positions.

From a day-to-day functional standpoint, Neuro-Ophthalmology in private practice feeds into my Oculoplastics practice by increasing my scope of practice and therefore referral base. Private practice Neuro-Ophthalmology is a limited entity, and has significant potential to elevate one's visibility in a practice community and therefore enhance one's surgical Oculoplastic volume, given the referral base's accurate understanding of one's scope of practice. Marketing of one's self must be consistently monitored to assure that referring physicians and optometrists understand such a unique skill set, and therefore refer appropriately.