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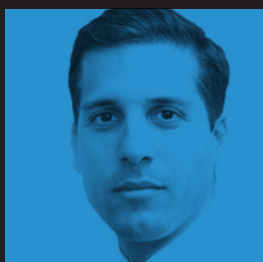


the
Ophthalmologist
Power List
2017



Meet the Top 50
“Rising Stars”
shaping the future of
ophthalmology

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On The Cover



*The Power List gets a
Mondrian Makeover*

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Don't Deflate

Feature

- 14 **The Power List: Rising Stars**
The 2017 Power List has arrived!
We asked you to name the up-
and-coming ophthalmologists
shaping the future of the field,
and here, we present the results.

In Practice

- 62 **New Carpet on Broken Tiles**
Radial Keratotomy was "big" in
the 1980s – but over time, the
drawbacks became apparent:
scarring and myopic shifts.
Arun Gulani says: don't be
disheartened by the scars –
good vision for your patients is
still possible.

Sitting Down With

- 66 **Farhad Hafezi**, Professor,
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Professor of Ophthalmology, Keck
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Publishing Limited, Haig House, Haig Road,
Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 8DX, UK.
Single copy sales £15 (plus postage, cost available
on request tracey.nicholls@texerepublishing.com)
Annual subscription for non-qualified recipients £110.

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Distribution:
The Ophthalmologist (ISSN 2051-4093)
is published monthly except July, by Texere
Publishing Ltd and is distributed in the USA
by UKP Worldwide, 1637 Stelton Road B2,
Piscataway, NJ 08854.
Periodicals Postage Paid at Piscataway,
NJ and additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send US address changes to
The Ophthalmologist, Texere Publishing Ltd,
c/o 1637 Stelton Road B2, Piscataway NJ 08854
Reprints & Permissions - tracey.nicholls@texerepublishing.com

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A close-up portrait of a man with light skin and brown eyes, wearing a teal surgical cap and blue scrubs. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

How to Never Be Bored

Sitting Down With... Farhad Hafezi,
Professor, University of Geneva; Clinical
Professor of Ophthalmology, Keck School of
Medicine, University of Southern California (USC)
Los Angeles, USA; Chief Medical Officer, The
ELZA Institute, Zurich, Switzerland.

A rising star in retinal degeneration research in the 1990s; a leading light in refractive surgery a decade later – why the big switch?

The change was inspired by my need to be fascinated by what I'm doing – coupled with the incredible enthusiasm of Theo Seiler. Shortly before I finished my residency in Zurich, Theo became chairman. Until then, I'd experienced relatively little mentorship. He passed on his love for the cornea, and I decided to follow it. Some people told me it was a foolish thing to do, especially as I already had around 20–25 papers on retina published, including a first-author cover story in *Nature Medicine* and a *Nature Genetics* co-authorship. At the time it may have seemed unwise, but looking back, I definitely don't regret it.

Research, patients, and faculty positions... How do you keep all your plates spinning?

The short answer is that I couldn't possibly do it alone. A good team is essential – and the best teammate I have found is my wife, Nikki, who is also my best friend and partner in research and business. An idea alone is only part of the battle. I realized that I had two choices: I could keep my ideas to myself and accept that they might never be realized, or I could share them and become a collaborator working with other sites to implement them. We run a small team, and we have more ideas than we have manpower and hours in the day. Besides our in-house research, we decided to identify bright young researchers – people who can get involved, pick up our ideas and run with them. We help with aspects like protocols and ethical approvals, but they execute the study.

How do you deal with any potential conflicts of interest?

Honesty is extremely important to me

– both professionally and personally. Of course, if there is a potential conflict of interest (when I'm involved in spinoff companies, for example), I always lay all of my cards out very openly on the table. It's an approach that's gained me respect in the field over the years – I always tell it how it is, whether that's to my advantage or disadvantage, and people really respond to that.

What does a typical week look like?

I usually see patients from 8 am–12 pm and 1–5 pm, five days a week. At noon, I eat and try to do some work on manuscripts and talks and I try to leave two or three hours free a week over lunch to speak to my basic research team. I aim to be home by 6 pm, because it's extremely important to Nikki and me that we spend time with our (still little) children and eat dinner together. At 8.30 pm when the children go to bed, we get back to work.

What do you hope to achieve over the next year?

I'm anticipating completing the PACK-CXL trial, and getting a CE mark for the C-Eye device for crosslinking at the slit lamp and launching it commercially. I'd also love to take a three-week vacation with my wife and kids... Knowing how our lives usually go, these things will probably all happen simultaneously!

What drives you – and how do you measure success?

I believe peer recognition is hugely important, as is advancing the field. And I derive a deep satisfaction from being able to help predominantly young people with keratoconus. Money has never been a motivator for me. If it was, I'd have become a banker or something – you need to work with money to make money. Balancing work and life would also be a great success, and I'm still looking for that magic formula. But

in all honesty, the simplest and most important motivation is to satisfy my own curiosity – it's just lovely to be able to play in this huge sandpit of research and science.

Any particular career highlights?

Professionally, the most exciting moment was when I was published on the cover of *Nature Medicine*, exactly 20 years ago. Back then, we connected to the Internet by dial-up modem, and I remember coming home late one Friday night, hoping to view the *Nature Medicine* website; slowly – almost pixel-by-pixel – I saw the cover appear... We were on it and I remember yelling with joy! I joke that it's a bit like the career of Orson Welles – you start out with this huge thing (*Citizen Kane*), and then for the rest of your career you're trying to get that again!

*“It's just lovely
to be able to
play in this huge
sandpit of research
and science.”*

What would your career epitaph be?

You could be the greatest researcher on earth, but if you are an arrogant, unpleasant person, nobody will remember you. So I would like to be remembered as a good, approachable person who helped others advance – especially the younger generation. Of course, it would also be great to be remembered for advancing the field! If I had to pick just one sentence, I'd like to paraphrase the Pet Shop Boys – “I was never boring, because I was never being bored.”