

5 Questions with Ivana K. Kim, MD

Ivana K. Kim, MD, is an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, and is Co-Director of the Harvard Medical School Department of Ophthalmology AMD Center of Excellence.



1. Why did you choose to focus your research on treatments for uveal melanoma?

Although tumor control is excellent with radiation, a large proportion of patients with uveal melanoma lose vision from radiation retinopathy. Also, effective methods to prevent and treat metastatic disease are still lacking. Because of the pioneering work of Evangelos Gragoudas, MD, in developing proton beam irradiation for uveal melanoma, the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary is a worldwide referral center for patients with this condition. Patient outcomes for the past 30 years have been recorded in a large registry, creating an invaluable resource for investigation. Seeing a large number of these patients with Dr. Gragoudas and recognizing the potential for advances in the field inspired me to try to play a role in improving treatments. The environment and resources at Mass Eye and Ear have been particularly conducive to my research.

the help of my colleagues in the retina service, we were able to recruit a good number of patients. The AREDS2 leadership and coordinating center made conducting the study relatively straightforward. For any long-term study with elderly patients, retention is always a challenge. But, because of the hard work of our study coordinators, I think we were able to do pretty well with having our patients complete the study.

2. What advice can you offer about being an effective speaker at clinical meetings?

The time allotted to our talks at meetings is typically quite short, so I think limiting the information presented to only the most critical is extremely important. This typically means minimizing introductory slides and getting to the point of the presentation quickly. Also, organizing the material in a very clear and concise manner is mandatory. When the talk is very short, it is a good idea to do a trial run to make sure it is not too long. It is always awkward when a speaker runs way overtime.

3. Describe the biggest challenge you faced as lead researcher for Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in the AREDS2 study.

I took over the study at Mass Eye and Ear when the previous principal investigator left, and so some valuable recruitment time was lost during the turnover. Thanks to

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4. Which aspect of your job do you most love? Are there some you do not like?

I really enjoy feeling that I had the opportunity to improve a patient’s quality of life by improving his or her vision through surgery or medical treatment. I also love being surrounded by colleagues and trainees that are always excited about discussing a challenging case or an interesting research proposal. I am less fond of the administrative and regulatory hurdles that seem to be continually expanding and impeding both clinical care and research.

5. If you could take a dream vacation, where would you go and with whom?

I would love to spend a few months going on an around-the-world trip with my family. My 4-year-old daughter never ceases to amaze me with her observational powers and insight. I am always wishing I could spend more time with her, and it would be amazing to see the world through her eyes. ■