

IN CONVERSATION WITH

# Iqbal K Ahmed

## From across the atlantic

Iqbal K Ahmed is a pioneering ophthalmologist from Canada, currently serving as Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, and Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Utah. He is also the Research Fellowship Director, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Toronto, and holds the chair for the Director of Glaucoma and Advanced Anterior Surgical (GAASS) Fellowship at the University of Toronto. He is renowned for his technological innovations in glaucoma surgery and contributions to the latest designs for intraocular implants. His main interests are complex glaucoma, cataract

and anterior segment work.

His groundbreaking innovations include new cataract and glaucoma instrumentation and techniques. He has devised diamond scalpels for glaucoma surgery, glaucoma implants, newer techniques for the management of dislocated lens, iris reconstruction and glaucoma drainage, to name a few. In 2010, he was selected as one of Canada's 'top 40 under 40' – a prestigious award recognising significant achievements at a young age. His course directorships include: The Toronto Cataract Course, COS Surgical Teaching Series, University of Toronto Resident Phaco Course, and AAO and ASCRS Non-Penetrating Glaucoma Surgery and Cataract / IOL Courses. He directed the third International Congress on Glaucoma Surgery in May 2006 in Toronto. He is on the editorial boards of Ophthalmology (Associate Editor, Multimedia), Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, Clinical



and Surgical Ophthalmology, Ocular Surgery News, Cataract and Refractive Surgery Today and Glaucoma Today, and is a reviewer for numerous journals. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and has won five film festival awards, three best papers of session, and a poster award at ASCRS, as well as an ESCRS first place video award and AAO 'Best of Show' award.

**“Think big, challenge the norm, and serve our patients.”**

### What are your three major strengths?

1. Questioning and challenging accepted dogma.
2. Passion for what I do.
3. Looking at things differently to most.

### What are your three major weaknesses?

1. Obsessive at times.
2. Impatient at times.
3. Taking on too much.

### What do you do in your spare time?

Family time.

### What is your dream travel destination?

K2.

### What is your favourite food?

Oatmeal.

### What makes you unhappy?

Intolerance and bigotry.

### If you could go into your past and change one thing, what would that be?

Get in better shape.

### What do you hate doing?

Giving people negative feedback.

### If you had three wishes, that were going to be granted, what would they be?

1. Peace and harmony on earth.
2. Feed the poor.
3. Keeping families together.

### What was the best time / moment of your life?

Getting married and the birth of my kids.

### If you were given a million pounds what would you do with it?

Provide food and shelter for those less fortunate.

### If you could be someone else, who would you be and why?

My wife because she is totally amazing and I have no idea what it's like to be such a successful mother / wife / friend / physician as she is.

### What was your career ambition initially?

Trauma surgeon.

### What would you have done as an alternative career?

Human rights lawyer.

### Who or what is your greatest source of inspiration?

God.

### What was the worst mistake in your career?

I wonder if I should have done more postgraduate work (i.e. a Masters degree).

### If you could recommend one book, which one would it be and why?

Read one of the Holy Books.

### What has been your greatest challenge? How did you overcome it?

Balancing career and personal / family life. I am still working on it – making sure I have as much time as I can blocked off for family time.

### What personal hopes and aspirations do you have?

See my kids be successful and happy in life, and be with my lovely wife.

### What do you foresee as the future of glaucoma?

Neuroprotection has to be the way of the future for glaucoma.

### What message would you like to give to ophthalmologists around the globe?

Think big, challenge the norm, and serve our patients.

### What message would you like to give to Eye News readers?

There is no formula for success. But one thing is certain – the mind can overcome anything.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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