

# Ruth Lapid-Gortzak, MD, PhD

Dr. Lapid-Gortzak practices cornea, cataract, and refractive surgery with Retina Total Eye Care, Driebergen, Netherlands, and is a scientific staff member in the Department of Ophthalmology, Cornea, Cataract, and Refractive Surgery Service, Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.



## 1. What is your greatest motivator to practice ophthalmology?

Ophthalmology captured my interest and attention the first day of my ophthalmology rotation as a medical student. The scope of the field is so great, as it offers diagnostic, clinical, technical, and surgical challenges with a high degree of innovation. Between these elements and contact with patients, there is never a dull moment. I am slowly becoming a workaholic, and I would nearly say that ophthalmology is my hobby.

## 2. What is the current focus of your research?

I am currently focusing on the results and outcomes of refractive surgery and, in particular, refractive cataract surgery. The concept of straylight is interesting to me. Straylight is by definition glare disability. It is a parameter of quality of vision that can be repeatably and reliably measured. Straylight is a concept by which quality of vision can be objectively measured, and it is slowly growing into a clinical method of determining how severely a cataract may impair one's visual quality. It is often the only way of identifying visual impairment in someone who has visual complaints but a good Snellen acuity, which is used as a quantitative test of vision. Acceptance of this concept is slowly growing, as is the body of scientific evidence about it. (Thomas van den Berg, PhD, has been developing this research for decades.) I am convinced that one day straylight will be part of our standard of care for preoperative diagnostics for cataract patients.

The other areas of research I am exploring are outcome studies of new multifocal IOLs and results of implantation of multifocal IOLs after refractive surgery procedures as well as other related issues. I have recently looked into the possible effects of multifocal pseudophakia after Nd:YAG capsulotomies on refraction. The field of premium lenses is developing at a rapid pace, and it is exciting to be part of it. I have implanted more than 1,000 premium lenses over the past few years. This is an experience that I would like to translate into helping residents in my department—our future ophthalmologists—by teaching them what is undoubtedly going to be the basis of their daily practice in just a few years.

## 3. What resources do you use to stay on the cutting edge of ophthalmic developments?

The most difficult issue with staying up to date is finding a way to obtain the information that you need without drowning in the excess information that is available. It is important to be selective and attentive. I use e-mail content alerts; listen to my colleagues, my team, and also to industry representatives; and make sure to regularly perform PubMed and other searches to find out what is new. The journals that are not peer reviewed are important, because they show us what the industry thinks is hot often earlier than the peer-reviewed publications; however, I think it is crucial to maintain a healthy dose of skepticism.

## 4. What is your advice to young ophthalmologists, particularly women, who are new to practice?

I do not like discussing gender issues, even though I know they exist. As a mother of three, and the wife of a plastic surgeon, I have a busy life. But then again, being the daughter of an ophthalmologist (the late Nitza Gortzak-Moorstein, MD) and a surgeon with three children, I never thought that combining a career with a family was an issue.

The most important thing is to keep your goals focused. Find a balance between family and career. Having kids will make one more efficient with his or her time. I recommend giving most of your paycheck to a babysitter—this is where it belongs. Invest in yourself as a clinician, a researcher, a professional, a partner in a marriage, and a parent—but not necessarily in this order.

## 5. What are your interests outside of ophthalmology?

I am interested in geopolitics. In my spare time, I enjoy reading books on recent history. From my point of view, we are living in a time of major political upheaval, and this is interesting from the perspective of society. I am also interested in where this political upheaval will take the community I come from and live in. For fun, I like having a meal or watching a good movie with family and friends and just hanging out. The simple, good things in life are what I appreciate most. ■