CME OUTFITTERS

Beyond VEGF

Understanding Blood-Retinal Barrier Biology and Emerging Mechanisms in DME and Neovascular AMD



Sunday, October 11, 2026

7:00–8:00 PM CT

Doors Open: 6:30 PM CT

Renaissance New Orleans Arts Warehouse District

Patrons Ballroom 1–4

This event is not affiliated with the official program of AAO 2026.

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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This CME Outfitters live symposium will ground learners in the biology of blood-retinal barrier (BRB) breakdown, weigh the mechanistic rationale behind therapies designed to restore barrier stability, and share practical strategies for recognizing and managing the anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) incomplete responder, essential context for retina specialists, ophthalmologists, optometrists, and the teams who care for these patients.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Retina specialists and other ophthalmologists; optometrists and allied health care professionals (HCPs) w/medical retina interest

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This activity is supported through an independent educational grant from Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, NJ, USA.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, learners will be able to better:

- Evaluate the cellular and molecular mechanisms by which BRB breakdown drives vascular leakage and vision loss in diabetic macular edema (DME) and neovascular age-related macular degeneration (nAMD)
- Assess the mechanistic rationale for emerging therapeutic approaches targeting BRB stability and vascular regulation in DME and nAMD
- Identify patients with DME or nAMD who demonstrate suboptimal anti-VEGF response to inform timely evidence-based management strategies

FACULTY PRESENTERS

Rishi P. Singh
MD, FASRS (Moderator)

Robert L. Avery
MD

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Rishi P. Singh
MD, FASRS (Moderator)

Chair of Ophthalmology

Mass Eye and Ear

Mass General Brigham, Boston, MA

Rishi P. Singh, MD, FASRS, is the chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at Mass General Brigham, overseeing ophthalmology across Massachusetts Eye and Ear, Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and affiliated sites in Boston, Massachusetts. He is also a professor of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School.

Previously, Dr. Singh served as Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health in Stuart, Florida, and as a staff physician and surgeon at Cleveland Clinic, where he was professor of Ophthalmology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He earned his undergraduate degree in medical science, summa cum laude, and his medical degree from Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. After an internship at Tufts University/New England Medical Center, he completed his ophthalmology residency at Massachusetts Eye and Ear/Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts and a vitreoretinal surgery fellowship at Cleveland Clinic's Cole Eye Institute in Cleveland, Ohio.

A vitreoretinal surgeon and clinician-scientist, Dr. Singh specializes in complex retinal disease, including age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion, and retinal detachment. He has authored more than 300 peer-reviewed publications, books, and book chapters and has served as principal investigator for numerous national and international clinical trials. His work spans therapeutic development, real-world evidence, imaging biomarkers, and strategies to improve the durability and delivery of retinal care.

Dr. Singh is the founder and president emeritus of the Retina World Congress and chairs major continuing medical education programs in retina, ophthalmic artificial intelligence, and real-world data. He is an associate editor of *Ophthalmic Surgery, Lasers and Imaging Retina* and has served on national professional committees and review panels. His leadership in clinical informatics has included enterprise implementation of ophthalmology-specific Epic workflows, digital informed consent, patient-facing kiosks, and imaging technologies.

His honors include the Alpha Omega Alpha Research Award, the American Society of Retina Specialists Young Investigator Award, the J. Donald Gass Beacon of Sight Award, and the Florida Society of Ophthalmology's John R. Brayton, Jr., MD Leadership Award. Through the Center for Ophthalmic Bioinformatics, Dr. Singh has advanced the use of large-scale clinical data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning to improve the understanding and treatment of retinal disease.

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Robert L. Avery
MD

Founder

California Retina Consultants

Santa Barbara, CA

Robert L. Avery, MD, is a practicing vitreoretinal specialist with over 30 years of clinical experience. He founded California Retina Consultants, and in 2020 aligned his practice with four others to form Retina Consultants of America, the largest retina practice in the country. His research interests have focused on vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), from its discovery in various eye diseases, to its initial blockade in the clinic with intravitreal injections and more recently with sustained delivery devices and gene therapy. Dr. Avery has been a principal investigator in over 100 clinical trials and holds patents on ocular drug delivery. He has over 20 years of experience as an angel investor and is a part of two ophthalmology venture capital companies. He has served on the board of directors of ophthalmology startups in drug delivery and artificial intelligence.

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Faculty

Dr. Singh reports the following financial relationships:

Advisory Board–EyePoint Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Ollin Biosciences, Inc.

Consultant–AbbVie Inc.; Alcon Inc.; Apellis Pharmaceuticals; Astellas Pharma Inc./ Iveric Bio, Inc.; Bausch + Lomb; Carl Zeiss Meditec AG; Genentech, Inc./Roche; Harrow; Ocular Therapeutix, Inc.; Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.; and Topcon Healthcare, Inc.

Ended–EyePoint Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Boehringer Ingelheim

Grants–Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (ended in 2024)

Stock Shareholder (ownership interest)–Ollin Biosciences, Inc. and Ocugen, Inc.

Dr. Avery reports the following financial relationships:

Consultant–4D Molecular Therapeutics (4DMT); AbbVie Inc.; Adverum Biotechnologies, Inc.; Alcon Inc.; Allergan Aesthetics; Amgen Inc.; Apellis Pharmaceuticals; Asclepix Therapeutics; Astellas Pharma Inc.; Aviceda Therapeutics; Bausch + Lomb; Belite Bio Inc; Cardinal Health; Clearside Biomedical; Coherus BioSciences; EyeBio; EyePoint, Inc.; ForwardVue Pharma; Genentech, Inc,; Ikarovec; Imprimis; INGENIA Therapeutics; Kriya Therapeutics; KYS Vision, Inc.; Merck & Co., Inc.; Merit; Nanoscope Therapeutics, Inc.; Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation; Nvasc, Inc.; Ocular Therapeutix, Inc.; Ocugen, Inc.; Ocugenix; Opthea; Optigo Biotherapeutics Inc.; Outlook Therapeutics, Inc.; Pixium Vision; Pr3vent AI; PulseMedica; Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.; Regenxbio Inc.; Replenish, Inc.; RetInSight; Re-Vana Therapeutics; Roche; Tenpoint Therapeutics; and Thea Pharma Inc.

Research Support–Adverum Biotechnologies, Inc.; Genentech, Inc.; Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.; Rehenxbio, Inc.; and RetInSight

Speakers Bureau–Genentech, Inc.

Stock Shareholder (ownership interest)–4D Molecular Therapeutics (4DMT); AbbVie Inc.; Adverum Biotechnologies, Inc.; Alcon; Aviceda Therapeutics; EyePoint Inc.; ForwardVue Pharma; INGENIA Therapeutics; KYS Vision, Inc.; Nanoscope Therapeutics, Inc.; Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation; Nvasc, Inc.; Ocular Therapeutix, Inc.; PulseMedica; Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.; Replenish, Inc.; and ReVana Therapeutics

Other financial or material support–Patents, Royalties: Replenish, Inc.

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