

**Joseph Hanna, MD, PhD**

jo.hanna@mail.utoronto.ca

Toronto, Canada

(647)979-7449

---

## **Personal Statement**

Early exposure to patients with glaucoma revealed to me the profound and often irreversible impact of vision loss, shaping my commitment to ophthalmology. Now, as a third-year ophthalmology resident at the University of Toronto, I am deliberately building a career that integrates clinical excellence with translational research in optic nerve disease.

I completed a Master's and Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, where my research focused on glaucoma pharmacotherapy and regenerative strategies for retinal disease. My work has been supported by over \$200,000 in competitive funding, including a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) doctoral award, and has resulted in a sustained record of peer-reviewed publications. Importantly, as a co-investigator on a CIHR-funded initiative, I worked directly with patients to incorporate their perspectives into research design—an experience that continues to shape my commitment to clinically meaningful, patient-oriented research.

In residency, I have prioritized the development of strong clinical and surgical skills, and I have been recognized with two awards for clinical excellence at the University of Toronto. Concurrently, I am actively involved in both clinical and translational research projects, including work in surgical innovation. This year alone, I have submitted two manuscripts and three in preparation. This integration of clinical practice and research has further solidified my interest in glaucoma, particularly the limitations of intraocular pressure-lowering therapies alone. I am specifically interested in neuroprotection and in developing strategies to preserve retinal ganglion cell function.

My goal is to pursue fellowship training in glaucoma and establish an academic practice that integrates a high-volume clinical service with a translational research program focused on neuroprotective therapies. I aspire to work with a multidisciplinary collaborative team at the interface of clinical and basic science, fostering collaborations that accelerate the translation of laboratory discoveries into therapeutic advances.

Alongside my academic work, I have a strong commitment to leadership and service through Rotary International, including leading initiatives to improve access to eye care in underserved communities in collaboration with Anishnawbe Health Toronto.

The Heed Resident Retreat represents a unique opportunity to engage with leaders in academic ophthalmology, refine my research direction, and build the mentorship and collaborative network essential for a career as a clinician-researcher in glaucoma. With a foundation in both clinical practice and translational research, I bring an integrated perspective that can foster meaningful, cross-disciplinary collaboration within ophthalmology and help bridge the gap between scientific discovery and patient care. I anticipate that participation in the Heed Resident Retreat will play a formative role in shaping my development as an academic ophthalmologist.