

UA South Campus Ophthalmology Residency Postcard from Hermosillo 2014



February 24 - 28, 2014

CLOSING THE LOOP!

For many, the big problem found when attempting to do international eye care work *is closing the loop*--not just diagnosing a condition and saying what ***should be done***, but actually ***providing care*** so that when the team leaves, ***the patient is not just better informed, but better off.***



This year we achieved that goal. Most people left seeing better, through glasses and refractive eye care. However, those with significant eye disease

were left with better disease management, through providing laser eye surgery. Our team was able to recognize and treat diabetic and glaucomatous eye disease.



(above... Dr. Jeffrey Kay and Dr. Billy McSwain (Resident) performing PRP Laser Surgery)

The mission this year was in partnership with **VOSH- Volunteer Optometrists Serving Humanity**, and with **The Sonoran Lions Clubs** who sponsor a clinic in Hermosillo.

VOSH

For many years, optometrists from Arizona have been going to Sonora Mexico to provide optometric care on a large scale- taking large teams of optometrists, large quantities of glasses that were inventoried, partnered with the Lions Club to obtain

the glasses. The organization, called VOSH (Volunteer Optometrists Serving Humanity) now has optometry students from the Arizona College of Optometry (Midwestern University Glendale). The members of VOSH reached out to our Department last year, and Dan Twelker OD PhD participated in their Brigade to Hermosillo last year. Dan became active, is now on the VOSH board, and coordinated a group the University of Arizona Department of Ophthalmology to collaborate in improving services.

TWO TEAMS, ONE MISSION

VOSH is a well-oiled team, with enough resources that they need to store equipment in Mexico the year round. They do things in a big way--large teams, lots of people helped, lots of government cooperation and sponsorship.



(Dr. Tammy Nguyen and Tin Huynh, of San Francisco. Tammy is a volunteer optometrist, and Tin works in software development, but came to help dispense glasses.)

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

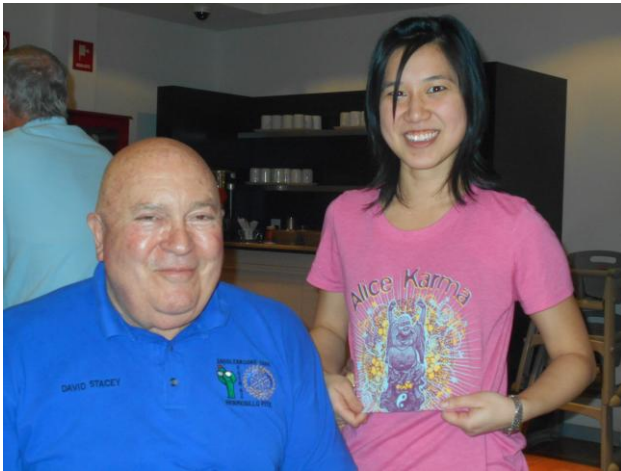
I have to admit, I was a little intimidated by the size of the setup. Target capacity for providing services at Centro de Atencion a Menores y Adolescentes was 800 people per day! You can't do that without some advance planning. Since we were not part of the planning, it was easy to wonder "What Happens Next?"



David Stacy OD (middle) is shown refracting with John Reed OD (back) and a student optometrist team from ACO.



Team from UA for the first half of the mission, left to right: Joe Miller MD (Department Head and Tucson Breakfast Lions Club member), Pat Broyles (Residency Program Coordinator, but travelling as Eyes On Sight Lions Club Branch volunteer), Billy McSwain MD (Resident) and Irene Campus (UA research team member from the Tohono O'odham Vision Screening Program, and dispenser of eyeglasses extraordinaire). *Not shown, arriving Wednesday,* Richard Ober MD, Dan Twelker OD PhD, and Tucson Ophthalmologist Jeffrey Kay.



Dr. Stacy, President of VOSH AZ, carries a strong resemblance to his cousin, the Smiling Buddha. David was a great host, and the project got off to a wonderful start for the team from the UA.



The Waiting Room....



Everyone starts by checking in. The check-in times were staggered, by prior arrangement, by the Rotarians who were the local hosts to VOSH. The goal was to be able to manage about 125 patients per hour.

Mr. Ed York is the all-around logistician of the group. He keeps things moving and unclogs the pipe as needed.

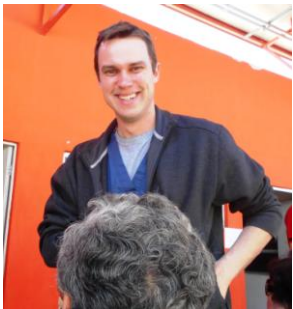


The hall started to fill... and fill... and fill...



First step is an acuity test, and reading glasses... Then autorefracton... this is where I was most often found, for when the autorefracton failed,

often there was either significant cataract that precluded improving the vision through glasses, other pathology readily identified, or simply a refraction that could not be managed by the autorefractor. I could often do a quick dry retinoscopy to get things started, or shunt a patient to "pathology" where Billy McSwain was working with Bruce Nelson MD, an ophthalmologist from North Dakota who has frequently volunteered.



(Billy McSwain MD, shown reaching in his pocket for the dilating drops that were the first step in the dilated fundus exam). (Bruce Nelson MD, checking visual fields)



Drs. Nelson and McSwain were identifying patients on Monday and Tuesday who would benefit from Laser surgery Thursday or Friday, and identifying patients with visually

significant cataract, who were interviewed by Roni Kozlowski RN, with the assistance of excellent translators provided by the local high schools.

Patients with cataract were listed and the list provided to the government hospital with recommendation for surgery. EVERYBODY went through autorefracton, so I got to take a peek at most everyone.



There is a high prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, uncorrected refractive error, and... well, shall we say "chairs that don't fit the patient to the autorefractor". I learned a new way

to fix that problem, thanks to Pat Stacy showing yet another way to lend a helping hand... (err... lap?)

After autorefracton, nearly all patients proceeded to the refracting lanes, manned by the optometrists,



and the optometry students led by Michael Kozlowski OD PhD, faculty member at the ACO.

(Above: Michael Kozlowski OD PhD, with Destin Whipple OD, in the refracting lanes).

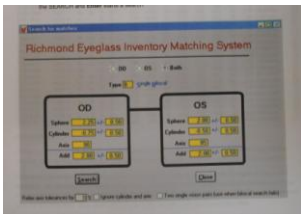
Below: Brad Volz OD, with students refracting)





(Dan Twelker OD PhD, UA Faculty and VOSH Board Member)

At this point, the patients have a prescription for glasses... and here is where it gets interesting. There is a "Lens Library" that has a stock of donated glasses, collected by the Lions Clubs, measured for optical power by volunteers, and carefully inventoried into a computer system.



After the prescription is written down, a computer program is consulted to obtain a list of closely matching spectacles.

The specs would then be presented to the patient, who could "try them on for size".

This could take a while, especially if what they wanted were red frames, not the closest matching lenses...



and so,

the line could go from inside the room, out the door... around the corner....



and around the next corner.... and then around the next corner!

It got a little crazy at times.



"Nothing we can't handle"

Opticians Pat Kelly and Harry Watson assisted those who needed their eyeglasses adjusted or needed a pair of "special order" eyeglasses.



We had several dignitaries come to visit, including Governor Guillermo Padres Elias (shown) and Mayor Alejandro Lopez Caballero (not shown).



As you might expect, however, it was the patients that stole the show for all of us. Among the more memorable for me...



A patient with very high myopia, receiving her first pair of glasses as an adult (... oh, that is where leaves come from ...)



(Julia Regan OD, Pat Stacy, and Joe Miller MD MPH, with dad and patient).

... and a highly myopic child with Down Syndrome, also receiving his first pair of glasses...

GERSON GONZALEZ LIONS CLINIC



(South Tucson Lions Club Member Gerson Gonzalez)

The UA team was with VOSH on Monday and Tuesday, but on Thursday and Friday they moved to the other side of town, where the Lions Club have a permanent health care facility named in honor of Tucsonan Lion Gerson Gonzalez.

Patients were seen on Thursday and Friday, and at the Lions Clinic Laser Surgical Services were provided for patients who had previously been identified by the Lions, as well as those screened during the VOSH Camp and identified as having glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy.



Jeffrey Kay MD, from Tucson brought a laser that could be used to treat Diabetic Retinopathy, create laser peripheral iridectomies, or perform argon laser trabeculoplasty for glaucoma.



(Richard Ober, MD, examining a child with Retinopathy of Prematurity)

Richard Ober MD, retina specialist and UA Professor of Ophthalmology, shared the treatment responsibilities, as did Billy McSwain MD.

The Lions Clinic was “extremely well subscribed” (meaning there were a LOT of patients that were seen). Dr. Ober estimates that 30 laser procedures were performed on Thursday and 80-100 performed on Friday.

All the patients who received this care were not otherwise able to afford treatment. Just as in the US, there is health care provided for the insured, and cash price care for the uninsured... but often there are those who could neither afford insurance (about \$30 / week / individual for the Government insurance) or the cash price for care.



We certainly appreciate the invitation from VOSH to participate in their program, and the opportunity to work with Dr. Kay and the Lions and Rotarians.



In summary, about 675 patients were seen on Monday and another 700 on Tuesday, with about 50 being referred to the Lions Clinic for Laser treatment on Thursday and Friday, and another 80 having been previously identified by the Lions.

The University of Arizona South Campus Residency in Ophthalmology has as a part of its mission to develop in our residents a capacity for care of the rural and underserved. We are fortunate to have made this connection with VOSH, The Lions and Rotarians, and the State of Sonora.

We thank the members of VOSH, and certainly enjoyed working with the faculty and students of the Arizona College of Optometry on the 2014 Mission to Hermosillo!



Planning is already underway for next year's mission to Sonora Mexico--to a farming community near Kino Bay (Miguel Aleman).