Approach to Eye Complaints
10/15/2017

3 main chief complaints: red eye, decreased visual acuity, and eye trauma

Basic approach

1) **Assess visual acuity**: Reading? Count fingers? Hand waving? See light? + Snellen chart
2) **Examine the conjunctiva and cornea with fluorescein** to find ulcers/abrasions
3) **Examine the anterior chamber with a slit lamp** for cell and flare. Looking to diagnose iritis or uveitis
4) **Examine the posterior chamber (check pressure)**: looking to diagnose acute angle closure glaucoma. >20 mmHg is a problem especially if pressures are not equal bilaterally
5) **Examine the retina and optic nerve with ultrasound**: Looking to diagnose retinal detachment, optic neuritis, papilledema, other.

Quick Facts

- **Visual acuity is the vital sign of the eye**, don’t forget to include it at the front of your objective section along with vital signs!
- **Examine carefully for foreign body**, have pt look in all directions, move around eyelids, use a light!
- **How to use Fluorescein**: positive = bright green area that doesn’t move with blinking
  - Position pt at 45 degrees,
  - Anesthetic drops (Parcaine/other)
  - Wet fluorescein strip with anesthetic drops
  - Touch strip at pocket under lower eyelid
  - Visualize with woods lamp (black light)
- **What is a slit lamp?** Device with magnification and lateral light beam on eye

Slit lamp video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9wMJ6job_0&t=62s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9wMJ6job_0&t=62s)