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Research assistant for Carole A. Timpne, O.D., chief of ocular disease and special testing

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Abstract
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RESEARCH ASSISTANT FOR
CAROLE A. TIMPONE, O.D.,
CHIEF OF OCULAR DISEASE
AND SPECIAL TESTING

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Doctor of Optometry Degree

Submitted by
Robert James Zak

Faculty Advisor
Carole A. Timpone, O.D.

December 1985
In fulfillment of the Pacific University College of Optometry (PUCO) research requirement, I chose the option of assisting a PUCO faculty member. In April, 1985, Dr. Robert Yolton, Director of Student Research, and Dr. Carole Timpone, Chief of PUCO's Ocular Disease and Special Testing Clinic (ODST), granted me the option to work with Dr. Timpone in ODST. During the months of September, October, and November, 1985, I worked for 95 hours as an assistant to Dr. Timpone in PUCO's ODST clinic. The following is a summary of my duties and activities.

Much of my time was spent in assisting and instructing my fellow interns who were on their rotations through the ODST clinic. This usually involved testing the patient's visual fields, color vision, refractive error, and assessing the health and integrity of the patient's eyes and visual system. It was important that I try to "keep things moving" as time was at a premium, and Dr. Timpone had many other responsibilities in addition to a full patient load in ODST.

Central visual fields were usually tested using the computerized Humphrey Visual Field Analyzer; I helped the interns select and initiate the appropriate computerized programs, and interpret the results of testing. Peripheral visual fields were tested using the Goldmann perimeter.

Some of the recorded Humphrey visual fields data was used
in Dr. Timpone's study of the use of contrast sensitivity testing as an early detector of high-IOP glaucoma. Visual fields and contrast sensitivity testing of three different populations were to be compared, those being known high-IOP glaucoma patients, ocular hypertensives, and normals. Some of the recorded Humphrey visual fields data was also to be used by Dr. Timpone in assessing whether or not the Humphrey's Glaucoma Screening Program was sensitive enough to detect the early onset of glaucoma in a patient.

One of my main duties in ODST was taking photographs of the patients' eyes for documentation and patient education of anterior and posterior segment pathological conditions. These photos were taken using one or more of three photographic systems: a non-mydriatic fundus camera, a mydriatic fundus camera, and a photo slit lamp and anterior segment camera.

The mydriatic camera had the option for stereo slide photos, which were used most often for optic nerve head examination. By viewing pairs of stereo slides in stereo viewers, the 3-dimensional appearance of each optic nerve head could be observed and documented.

A good deal of my time in ODST was spent in organizing ODST patient data into several filing systems. It was my responsibility to ensure that interns on ODST rotations completed and submitted ODST patient information forms. A computer file for each patient was constructed, into which was entered all
pertinent data. A file for the storage of the photographic slides of each ODST patient was also maintained.

My other activities included assisting Dr. Timpone in the preparation of the patient and equipment for ERG testing. I also served as "the patient" in our efforts to establish valid ERG readouts using two different types of corneal electrodes.

Diagnostic procedures with ODST patients often required the expertise of Dr. Timpone, in which case the interns and myself were observers. At these times Dr. Timpone would conscientiously demonstrate the procedures to us; these included gonioscopy, contrast sensitivity testing, and Goldmann perimetry to name but a few. Despite the fact that Dr. Timpone had a very busy schedule, she nonetheless took the time to share her extensive knowledge concerning the diagnosis and treatment of each patient's pathological condition(s).

In summary, working with Dr. Timpone was a valuable introduction to the operation of a specialty clinic. I learned much about instrumentation, testing, ocular pathology diagnosis, record-keeping, and patient communication. It was a privilege to work with Dr. Timpone, as such a research option certainly expanded the scope of my optometric education. I definitely recommend this research option to other students at PUCO.