

Confrontational Visual Field

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Visual field testing is an essential part of the ophthalmological evaluation; many conditions that can affect vision, such as glaucoma, strokes, tumors, and retinal detachments, will affect visual fields. Confrontational visual field testing is a quick clinical exam technique that provides a gross assessment of the visual fields.

To perform the test, ask the patient to cover one of his or her eyes and focus the on your nose. While performing the test, sit directly in front of the patient, with the seat height adjusted such that equal eye level is maintained with the patient. Make sure that lighting is adequate to permit easy visualization. Cover your opposite eye (i.e. the eye directly across the patient's covered eye) and ask the patient to count the number of fingers that you flash in each quadrant. Flash fingers in each quadrant equidistance between you and the patient, using your own peripheral vision as a control whether the patient should be able to count your fingers.

The confrontational visual fields test is commonly used as a preliminary screening tool prior to a computerized and more detailed assessment of a patient's visual fields, such as automated perimetry¹. While the sensitivity and specificity are lower than automated perimetry, confrontational visual fields have been shown to have a high positive predictive value (72.6%) and a high negative predictive value (75.7%)², making it a valuable screening tool for ocular disease.² Note, the reliability of the test varies greatly with patient cooperation, and is limited by altered mental status or other factors which may make the patient unable to cooperate for the test.

References

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