

Transferring the Patient from the Wheelchair

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Ophthalmic photographers encounter patients of all sizes, shapes, and disabilities. One challenge for photographers is patients in wheelchairs. Many fundus cameras are not accessible to wheelchairs. But with simple techniques and the help of another photographer or technician, transferring a patient from a wheelchair to a stool can be a safe and simple task.

Problem

One problem we have encountered is trying to position a patient who is in a wheelchair close enough to the fundus camera. Our fundus camera table will not adjust low enough to fit most wheelchairs. The arms of wheelchairs also tend to block the table from lowering. Additionally, the patient is often seated too far back in the wheelchair to be able to reach the chin rest comfortably.

Please note that some wheelchairs do have removable arms, or arms of short enough length to maneuver the chair underneath the fundus table. With these chairs, transferring the patient is unnecessary (Fig. 1.).

Solution

Transferring a patient from a wheelchair to a stool can be easily accomplished by following these few steps. Before the transfer, we explain the intended procedure. We also talk the patient through the transfer.



Figure 1: Some wheelchairs are able to maneuver underneath the fundus table, making patient transfer unnecessary.

First, ask the patient if they are able to stand without assistance (their answer will determine how you will help them). The patient may be unable to be transferred from the wheelchair due to disabilities such as a back injury or a hip replacement. In this instance, alternative methods of fundus photography may need to be pursued (eg. hand held fundus cameras).

If the patient is able to stand up alone, then push the wheelchair close to the fundus camera, leaving enough room for the patient to stand (Fig. 2). Have the patient grab onto the lower supports of the chin rest for stability, or the patient may balance better with one



Figure 2: Push the wheelchair close to the fundus camera, leaving enough room for the patient to stand.



Figure 3: The second person puts the stool behind the patient's knees so that they can feel the stool behind them.

hand on your arm. You may want to insure the stability of the fundus camera.

Once the patient is standing, have the other person pull the wheelchair out from behind the patient. The photographer continues to help steady the patient. Next, the second person puts the stool behind the patient (Fig. 3). It should fit up against the back of their knee so that they can feel the stool behind them. Care should be taken to make sure that the stool does not roll out from under the patient, while the photographer helps the patient sit down.

If the patient is unable to stand without assistance, you will need a third person to help with the transfer. The procedure remains essentially the same, however, you will need to have someone on each side of the

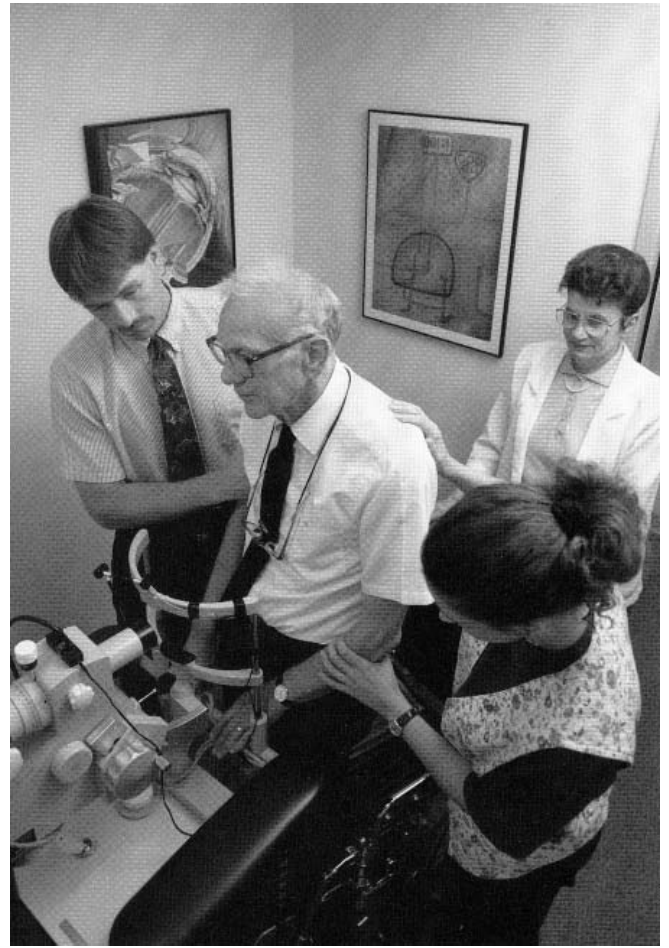


Figure 4: With someone on each side of the wheelchair to lift the patient up, a third person replaces the wheelchair with a stool.

wheelchair to lift the patient up, while the third person replaces the wheelchair with the stool (Fig. 4).

After photographing the patient transferring him or her back follows the reverse procedure.

About the authors: Jason Bye, Patrick Same, and Michael Borgrud work together at Davis Duehr Eye Associates, one of the nation's largest independent eye clinics. Jason Bye is the Vice-President of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society and Patrick Saine is currently serving as President of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society. Both Bye and Borgrud are diligently working toward CRA certification.

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