

IN THIS ISSUE:

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER | QUALITY AND SAFETY CORNER

A new vision takes hold at Yale's Eye Center



Dr. Daniel Salchow performs an eye exam on Andrew Blake.

Andrew Blake was only a few years old when he began to squint. Later he panicked if he entered a dark room, and his parents noticed that he couldn't see the TV right in front of him. The lenses in his eyes had shifted, and on the advice of his doctor, his mother drove him from their home in Plainville to the Yale Eye Center to see an expert, Daniel Salchow, MD, who is now monitoring him to figure out the best timing for a lens transplant.

The Yale Eye Center projects about 2,600 pediatric visits from children like Andrew this year, an increase of 1,000 visits over 2007.

"We want to make sure that no patient, adult or child, needs to leave the state of Connecticut for eye care..."

James Tsai, MD

James Tsai, MD, MBA, chief of ophthalmology at Yale-New Haven Hospital, came to the Yale Eye Center from Columbia University in 2006 with the goal of expanding services at YNH, and providing comprehensive care for both simple and complex eye pathology. He has since brought in six new ophthalmologists, one optometrist, two researchers and one clinical research coordinator, most of whom will provide both adult and pediatric care.

A year ago, Dr. Tsai cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the Yale Eye Center's newly refurbished comprehensive clinical facility on the third floor of Temple Medical Building at 40 Temple Street in New Haven.

"We want to make sure that no patient, adult or child, needs to leave the state of Connecticut for eye care," said Dr. Tsai, who is also the Robert R. Young Professor and chair of the department of ophthalmology and visual science at Yale School of Medicine.

Ophthalmologists on staff have a variety of specialties. Dr. Salchow, director of pediatric eye care, is an expert on amblyopia, strabismus and cataract surgery. He completed his medical degree at University of Lübeck in Germany, his residency at Columbia University's Harkness Eye Institute and a pediatric ophthalmology fellowship at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Kathleen M. Stoessel, MD, heads Yale's Retinopathy of Prematurity

See **EYE CENTER**, page 2

Signs of possible eye problems in children

How does a parent or pediatrician know when a child needs an ophthalmologic examination?

According to Dr. Salchow, "If there is anything that seems funny or not right, in terms of vision, or eyesight or alignment of the eyes, it's time to refer a child."

The following signs and symptoms may indicate eye problems in children:

- ⇨ What do the child's eyes look like?
 - Eyes don't line up, one eye appears crossed or looks out
 - Eyelids are red-rimmed, crusted or swollen
 - Eyes are watery or red (inflamed)
- ⇨ What does the child say?
 - "My eyes are itchy," "My eyes are burning," or "My eyes feel scratchy," "I can't see very well."
 - After doing close-up work, the child says "I feel dizzy," "I have a headache" or "I feel sick/nauseous."
- ⇨ How does the child act?
 - Rubs eyes a lot
 - Closes or covers one eye
 - Tilts head or thrusts head forward
 - Has trouble reading or doing other close-up work, or holds objects close to eyes to see
 - Blinks more than usual or seems cranky when doing close-up work
 - Things are blurry or hard to see
 - Squints eyes or frowns

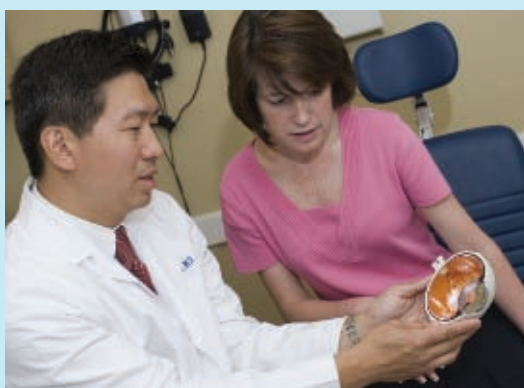
EYE CENTER, continued from page 1

program, monitoring and treating premature infants a year who are at high risk for retinal detachment and impaired vision or even blindness without rapid diagnosis and treatment. Other members of the staff working with children include Jimmy Lee, MD, who specializes in corneal diseases, and Rob Bernardino, MD, an expert in oculoplastics and orbital surgery.

Miguel Materin, MD, from the Wills Eye Institute in Philadelphia, will join the Eye Center early this year. An ocular oncologist, he is an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of eye cancers such as retino-blastoma and choroidal melanoma in children and adults. Dr. Tsai expects to hire an additional pediatric ophthalmologist in the next few months.

There is a warm, comfortable pediatric waiting area and dedicated pediatric exam rooms in the Eye Center's new Temple Street office, along with child-friendly, cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic equipment.

"We have 20-foot long exam rooms that enable us to properly measure eye misalignment," said Dr. Salchow. "Children don't always want to cooperate, so we have ways to make the



Dr. James Tsai explains a diagnosis in an eye center exam room.

exam interesting and playful. Instead of saying 'follow this object' or 'follow my light,' I show them an animal on top of my light. I can also show short movies, so that when I cover one eye, I can ask them what they're seeing in the movie."

A few blocks away in Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, an operating room is dedicated half-time to pediatric eye surgeries. Ophthalmologists working in the hospital have access to RetCam, a sophisticated digital imaging system that can be used at the bedside in the neonatal intensive care unit to photograph the retina, and elsewhere in the hospital to take pictures of retinal hemorrhages that can be used to document "shaken baby syndrome."

attended a special training session and were provided with an RCA toolkit session that includes a list of events that require an RCA, a worksheet for performing an RCA and a high-level report template, along with resources for coaching.

All RCAs are reported to the Quality and Safety Council, which evaluates action steps for hospital-wide implementation. Since the process was implemented, YNHCH has identified many action items, and has been successful at engaging medical and nursing leadership from inpatient and out-patient units to develop their own root cause networks focused on improving systems of care.

Dr. Tsai is building upon the Yale Eye Center's reputation as a research center able to offer scientific discoveries and clinical trials to patients in need. Projects include his own investigation of neuroprotective effects of certain molecules in animal models of glaucoma, which he expects will eventually lead to new treatment strategies for adults and children with the disease.

One of Dr. Salchow's projects is a study of the relationship between obesity and eye problems such as cataracts and glaucoma.

Meanwhile, Dr. Salchow has set a goal of making sure that all children in Connecticut receive proper screenings and eye care, whether or not they have a serious eye disease or disorder. Vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers and one in four school-age children. Amblyopia, decreased visual acuity in an otherwise normal eye, can become a permanent condition if not diagnosed and treated early.

Around 25 percent of children in the U.S. need glasses, usually by 6 or 7 years of age. Diagnosing them can be tricky, and Dr. Salchow suggests parents take their children to a pediatric ophthalmologist for an accurate assessment. "Children compensate a lot," he said. "During an exam, they'll adjust their eyes to the point where they might even make themselves artificially nearsighted. I've seen lots of children who were prescribed glasses when they didn't need them."

Families who are referred to Yale Eye Center for pediatric care should find service quick, convenient and family friendly. "The whole setup is designed to make it easy for children and parents," Dr. Salchow said.

TO CONTACT THE PEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT THE YALE EYE CENTER OR MAKE A DIRECT REFERRAL, CALL 203-785-2020 OR TOLL-FREE 1-800-395-7949.

Quality and Safety Corner

Process tracks adverse events

As part of creating a culture of safety, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital has developed an innovative process for performing root cause analyses (RCAs), investigations that take place after there has been a safety or quality incident, to help identify and prevent medical errors.

Physicians and nurses from each clinical area at YNHCH participate in a root cause analysis network to ensure adverse events or near misses are identified. Members of the network