CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS INDICATING VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Client: ___________________________ Examiner: ___________________________
Date: ___________________________ Diagnosis: ___________________________

VISUAL ACUITY

Ask the client to read a line of standard size print (10 point or 1M) in a newspaper, magazine, or book.

- complains that the print looks fuzzy or blurry
- complains of inability to bring the print into focus
- continuously adjusts focal length of the page as if trying to bring the print into focus
- complains that the print is too small or too faint to read
- brings the page of print in very close (less than 16 inches) to try to read it
- shifts the page of print to one side of midline (up, down, left, right) to read it
- views the print out of the corner of the eye or by looking above or below the line of print

General Observations

- complains of an inability to recognize faces
- states that he/she can see better out of the corner of an eye or eyes
- states that vision fluctuates throughout the day
- states that colors are difficult to distinguish (especially dark colors: black, navy, purple)
- uses a flashlight to view objects and/or states that additional light is needed for tasks

CONTRAST SENSITIVITY FUNCTION

Ask the client to fill a clear glass with water from the tap or a pitcher to within 1/2 inch of the brim.

- complains that he/she can’t see the level of water as it rises in the glass
- over fills the glass
- uses the tip of a finger over the brim of the glass to tactually determine the water level
- moves in very close to the glass to view the water level
- tilts the glass back and forth to create movement to determine the water level

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Ask the client to fill a black cup with milk to within 1/2 inch of the brim and compare with his/her performance using the clear glass and water.

Observe the client ambulate in environments with low contrast features such as unmarked curbs, subtle changes in the support surface, areas with poor illumination, furniture that does not contrast from surrounding features, door frames that do not contrast from doors etc.

- hesitates when approaching curb or subtle change in support surface
- misses curb or does not see it until directly on top of it
- trips when transitioning between support surfaces of similar color
- bumps into or comes very close to low contrast obstacles (furniture etc.)
- uses hands to guide self around an obstacle

General Observations

- complains of an inability to recognize faces
- performance on tasks or ambulation declines in dimly lit surroundings
- is unable to accurately distinguish colors of similar hues such as dark blue from black, purple from dark blue or black, white from beige etc.
- requests additional illumination when performing a task

VISUAL FIELD DEFICIT

Observe the client ambulate through crowded areas with moving obstacles.

- collides or comes very close to obstacles consistently on one side in an unfamiliar environment
- stares straight ahead at the floor immediately in front of him/her
- and/or consistently stares to one side
- stays very close to one side of the wall when ambulating down a hallway
- uses fingers to “trail” wall to tactually guide self
- refuses to take the lead when ambulating, preferring to walk behind others
- appears anxious or uncertain in crowded areas
- stops walking when approaching or passing by another moving person or object
- complains of feeling off balance particularly to one side
Ask the client to read aloud a paragraph of 10 point (1 m) or larger text printed on an 8.5 x 11 inch piece of paper.

- transforms words by omitting or misreading letters on one side of the word(s)
- abbreviates scan to one side of the page, omitting word(s) on that side
- uses finger to direct scan across the line of print and maintain place on the page
- consistently loses place on one side of the page
- hesitates reading a word, or misreads a word initially then corrects self; reads very slowly

General Observations

- avoids crowds and crowded environments such as shopping centers
- avoids obstacles in familiar environments but collides with obstacles in unfamiliar environments
- complains of disorientation when riding in a car or a wheelchair
- reads only half of a wide sign or misses signage on one side
- transforms numbers, for example, reads an 8 as a 6 or a 3
- displaces writing to one side when completing a form such as a check
- handwriting drifts up or down when writing on line or addressing an envelope
- complains of being unable to follow what is happening on television particularly when viewing a dynamic sporting event (football, basketball, etc.) or a show with a lot of action
- makes mistakes dialing a telephone; such as pressing a similar but incorrect number
- scans shelves or counters very slowly to find items and often is unable to locate an item
- has become very particular that items be returned to a specific location following use and becomes upset with others who leave items out or return them to a different location

HEMI INATTENTION

- only comments on objects or visual details on one side of a visual scene
- initiates and confines search pattern to the right side of an array
- is hesitant to shift eyes across midline towards left side; unable to maintain fixation on an object placed to the left of midline
- is reluctant to turn towards the left and/or avoids left turns during ambulation
fails to search the environment for information needed to adapt, such as looking at a clock or a wristwatch when asked what time it is

fails to rescan or check work for errors when completing a complex task

demonstrates reduced effort on tasks which require visual discrimination

is easily distracted by motion occurring on the right side; directs attention to the right visual field frequently during tasks

is unable to maintain concentration on a task which requires sorting through visual information or attention to visual detail; forgets what he/she is looking for or makes mistakes in identification

COMBINATION OF HEMI INATTENTION AND VISUAL FIELD DEFICIT

These behaviors represent exaggerations of those observed in clients with either hemi inattention or visual field deficit. The client usually requires repeated physical cues to correct behavior or redirect attention.

veers off towards the right side when propelling a wheelchair or when ambulating

consistently bumps into furniture or objects on the left side in familiar environments

becomes disoriented when moving in environment; unable to locate needed landmarks

fails to acknowledge or notice persons positioned on the left side

fails to pick up or notice an object on the left side during a visual search for the object

places only the right foot on the wheelchair footplate or the right ear piece of eyeglasses on the ear and does not correct error

shaves or applies cosmetics only on the right side of the face or combs only the right side of his/her hair and does not correct error

only eats food located on the right side of a plate and cannot locate uneaten food

misreads time on a clock and does not attempt to correct error

omits or misreads words and does not attempt to correct error

complains of clumsiness but is uncertain as to the reason for the clumsiness

places both legs through one hole in underwear or pants

misplaces clothing or toiletry items when dressing and does not attempt to locate them

unable to correct performance with only auditory or visual cuing; also requires physical cuing and often needs repeated cuing

demonstrates poor carryover of strategies taught to compensate for the visual field deficit
OCULOMOTOR DYSFUNCTION

______ complains of double vision, or blurring vision or a shadow when viewing objects which may vary with the focal length or direction of gaze and may be constant or intermittent

______ assumes a consistent and deliberate head position when viewing objects and resists changing this head position

______ is reluctant to participate in activities presented at a specific focal distance or attempts to change the distance at which the task is placed (for example, changes focal distance of reading materials)

______ complains of blurring of vision when changing focus from a near object to a distant object and/or is very slow in transitioning between focal distances

______ shuts an eye or turns head to view an object

______ complains of eye pain with movement of the eyes

______ squints when viewing objects

______ shows excessive blinking when viewing objects which is not related to eye irritation

______ eye(s) appear to turn in or out when viewing objects

The following observations may indicate convergence insufficiency in addition to other oculomotor deficiencies

______ complains of inability to keep objects in focus especially at a near distance

______ complains of eye fatigue or eye pain (not related to eye irritation) after a period of sustained focus on a task especially at a near distance

______ complains that print begins to swirl or move on a page after a period of sustained focus

______ complains of difficulty concentrating on tasks requiring sustained focus at a near distance

______ complains of a headache after a period of sustained viewing especially at a near distance

______ complains of fatigue after a period of sustained viewing especially at a near distance

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS