



Steven J. Gedde, M.D., reviews images with second year resident Vivian Schiedler, M.D.

Glaucoma Specialist Advancing Field Through Education

Steven J. Gedde, M.D., associate professor of ophthalmology, believes that education is one of the most powerful ways to impact the field of ophthalmology. So, it's understandable that he spends a good deal of his time directing Bascom Palmer's Resident Training Program—one that's consistently been rated the best in the nation.

"Early in my career I decided the best way that I could contribute to the field of ophthalmology is through education," he says. "If I can help train outstanding ophthalmologists, they can go on and provide high quality ophthalmic care to their patients and teach others in their local communities." This results in what he calls "exponential dissemination of knowledge."

As director of resident training, Gedde's responsibilities are significant. Included among them are ensuring a high-quality educational experience for the young ophthalmologists, assessing performance, coordinating their supervision in the operating room and clinics, scheduling their ophthalmic rotations and serving as a liaison between faculty and residents. He also maintains close direct contact with the residents by staffing a resident referral glaucoma clinic and instructing in surgery. One of the most challenging responsibilities associated with his position is being a part of the training selection process. Gedde works closely with Victor T. Curtin, M.D., emeritus professor of ophthalmology, in annually screening about 500 candidates applying for 7 coveted positions. "It's been a great pleasure and privilege for me to work with Dr. Curtin in the residency selection process. Dr. Curtin has a great track record for picking superb residents, and I've learned a great deal from him," Dr. Gedde said.

Significant as they are, the educational responsibilities only cover a portion of Gedde's professional life. In addition to a flourishing clinical practice and administrative responsibilities, Gedde is the lead investigator of the "Tube Versus Trabeculectomy" (TVT) Study, an important multi-center clinical trial that is evaluating two types of surgical procedures for glaucoma patients. While both procedures yield positive outcomes and low

complication rates, there is little agreement on which is the better operation in certain clinical situations.

"By answering that question, we can improve patient care and enable patients to make better informed choices," Gedde says. He developed the study with Richard K. Parrish II, M.D., professor of ophthalmology and associate dean for graduate medical education at the University of Miami School of Medicine and Dale K. Heuer, M.D., chairman at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Along with his academic, clinical and research efforts, Gedde has published extensively and serves as an editorial board member and reviewer for four publications and one vision information network. He also serves as an oral examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology and writes exam questions for the written board exam. Gedde sees that work as an extension of his efforts to advance the field through education. "Education is so powerful. I have found that the act of organizing and simplifying information for others challenges my own skills and depth of understanding."

For all his commitments, Gedde says one of the most gratifying things about his work is the long-term relationships he develops with his patients. "Glaucoma, like many ocular diseases, is chronic in nature. That means it requires a continuum of care. Over time you get to know your patients and develop relationships with them. That's tremendously gratifying."

He calls glaucoma an "exciting subspecialty area." And though he believes he could have been happy pursuing other specialties and subspecialties as well, ophthalmology, and glaucoma in particular, provide what he calls a nice mixture of the medical and surgical aspects of practice. He says his field incorporates technology, diagnostics and treatment modalities that are constantly evolving for the benefit of patient care.

Though his time with friends, watching movies, fishing and tending to his new home is limited, he considers himself extremely blessed. "I find my job very fulfilling; I love going to work every day." He adds, "If in 30 years, I am doing the same thing that I'm doing now, I would be extremely happy."