[In paediatric ophthalmology there is no preferred timing for retinoscopy]

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BACKGROUND: In paediatric ophthalmology retinoscopy may be performed immediately after an orthoptic examination or during an additional ambulatory visit. So far, no studies have been performed to investigate which of both procedures is preferred by the persons accompanying or examining the children. PATIENTS AND METHODS: 32 consecutive children under the age of 16 were randomly assigned to have retinoscopy immediately after the orthoptic examination or during an additional visit. Children coming from far away or needing a cycloplegia with atropine were excluded from this study. The accompanying persons and the examiners (orthopedist/physician) were interviewed using a validated, written questionnaire. Associations between answers were determined via a cluster analysis. RESULTS: 84 % (28/32) of all accompanying persons returned the questionnaire. The timing of retinoscopy was not associated with other variables. The question "Would you recommend our Department?" was strongly associated with how the accompanying persons judged the medical and orthoptic examination and also with the waiting times. CONCLUSIONS: There is no difference for the accompanying persons and the examiners if retinoscopy is performed immediately after an orthoptic examination or during an additional visit. As reported in the literature about patient satisfaction in an ambulatory setting, we found that the satisfaction of the accompanying persons correlated with the interaction between health professionals and the persons accompanying the children, as well as with the waiting times.