Despite having multiple medical issues from a young age, the one thing Daniel Summers always had was his vision. That all changed one day in the summer when he was traveling to Fort Collins for a vacation with his wife. The usual deep blue sky took on a faded green appearance that his wife could not appreciate. Later that evening in the vacation home with the lights out, he felt completely blind while his wife could easily maneuver around.

As these unusual symptoms persisted, he sought care at the UNM Eye Clinic. The neuro-ophthalmologist, Kevin Sitko, MD found normal visual acuities and his examinations too were unremarkable. As his normal retinal structure would not betray any evidence of dysfunction, Dr. Sitko turned to electro-physiologic testing to try to elucidate the pathology. Fortunately, the UNM Eye Clinic has the only fully capable visual electrophysiology service in the state of New Mexico. The full field electro-retinographic (ERG) testing verified that the problem was with the function of his retinas, and more specifically a defect in rod function. With that objective evidence and the patient’s own vivid description of his recently acquired night vision problem, it became apparent that he was suffering from vitamin A deficiency.

Further probing into his medical history revealed chronic malabsorption as a result of radiation enteritis suffered due to the treatment of a genitourinary cancer at age 19. Serum levels of vitamin A were obtained and found to be significantly deficient. Fortunately, levels were replenished over the following weeks with the help of his primary care physician, with complete resolution of his symptoms and complete normalization of his ERG.

The UNM Eye Clinic is happy to make available the use of the new Visual Electrophysiology Service to any eye care provider whose patients might benefit from it. The newly acquired equipment has the capability to provide objective measure of visual function from the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) to the visual cortex. Testing capabilities include electro-oculography (EOG), full field electroretinography (ERG), multifocal ERG, pattern ERG, and pattern reversal visual evoked potentials (VEP). As Director the UNM Neuro-ophthalmology Service, Dr. Sitko sees patients with all types of diseases affecting the neurologic pathways of vision and eye movements.

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