Characterizing Pediatric Utilization of Ophthalmology-Specific Emergency Department Services
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INTRODUCTION
The Bascom Palmer Eye Institute (Miami, FL) maintains a 24-hour ophthalmology-specific emergency department (ED). There are approximately 20,000 new patient visits a year. The purpose of this study is to describe the nature and utilization trends of the pediatric patient population presenting for emergency care.

METHODS
This is a retrospective review of all pediatric patients (ages 0-17) over a one year period from June 1, 2014-May 31, 2015 presenting to the ED for an ocular evaluation. Metrics including patient demographics, insurance status, time of presentation, and diagnosis were derived from electronic medical record (EMR) data.

RESULTS
Of 19,503 total ER visits, 1,639 (8.4%) were pediatric. Of these patients, 54% were male and 46% were female. An average of 4.5 patients presented on a daily basis, with a mean age of 9.3 years. Most patients presented in the afternoon (67%) with only a minority (21%) presenting over a weekend. March witnessed the most pediatric ED visits, while November saw the least. The most common diagnoses were corneal abrasion and chalazion, followed by allergic and viral conjunctivitis. Most pediatric patients were privately insured (67%), the others having federal insurance (17%), regional insurance (1%), or self-paying (15%).

DISCUSSION
To our knowledge, this represents the first study examining the utilization patterns of pediatric patients presenting to an ophthalmology-specific ED.

CONCLUSION
Children composed a fairly large proportion of the patients presenting to an ophthalmology-specific ED, however their diagnoses tended to be self-limiting conditions. Overall, there was wide variability in the age and timing of presentation. This study is consistent with the literature that a sizeable number of ED visits are non-emergent.