

# A Technique for Photographing Cleft Palate Patients

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The evaluation of the child with a cleft lip or palate typically includes records in the form of photographs, casts, tapes, or roentgenograms. With the repeated use of these recording techniques, the physician obtains an accurate record of the growth and development of the patient. The purpose of this paper is to describe a photographic technique developed by the authors to facilitate the recording of the development and progress of the patient. In most centers, photographs are prepared and kept on file to be reviewed during the course of treatment. The problems with such a system are those inherent with 35 mm photography; namely that a) one may or may not have photographed the desired view to best advantage, and b) the mistake does not become evident until the entire film is developed. Usually, the patient is not available for another photograph so that the record either includes no photograph or includes one of inferior quality. A second problem is that 2 x 2 slides are difficult to view conveniently, and, in addition, there is also the possibility of loss or misplacement.

With these problems in mind, a technique has been devised specifically for use with cleft lip and palate patients (Figure 1). It employs a Polaroid film-pack, and so the photograph is available for viewing in a period of ten seconds. The advantage of having instantaneous development with the availability to re-take (if the picture is not satisfactory) is self-evident. Since it is a black and white positive photograph, 4 x 5 in size, it can be attached to the patient's folder immediately and becomes a part of the permanent record for him.

Simplicity is the keynote of the camera since there are only two positions available. The first position with the chin resting on the socket chin rest gives an intraoral view of the oral cavity or occlusion (Figure 2). The second position is for full face or lateral face photographs (Figure

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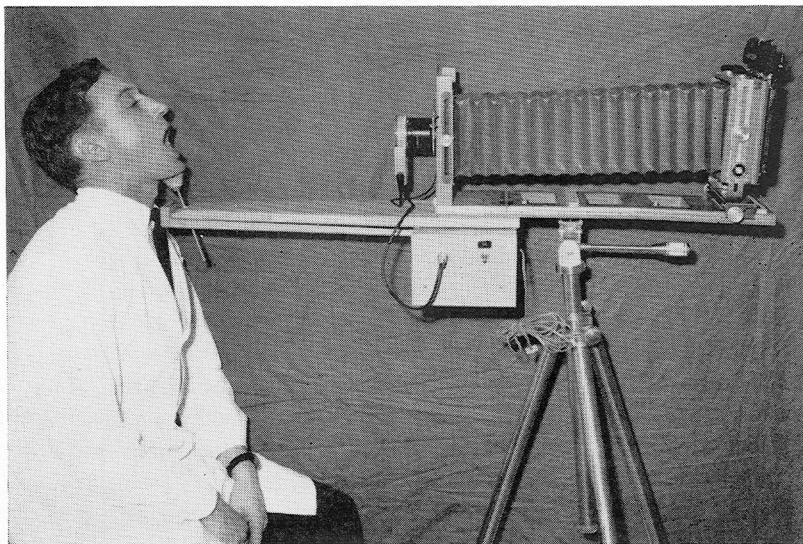


FIGURE 1. Position of patient for intraoral picture of the palate using fixed position and a 4 x 5 Polaroid back.

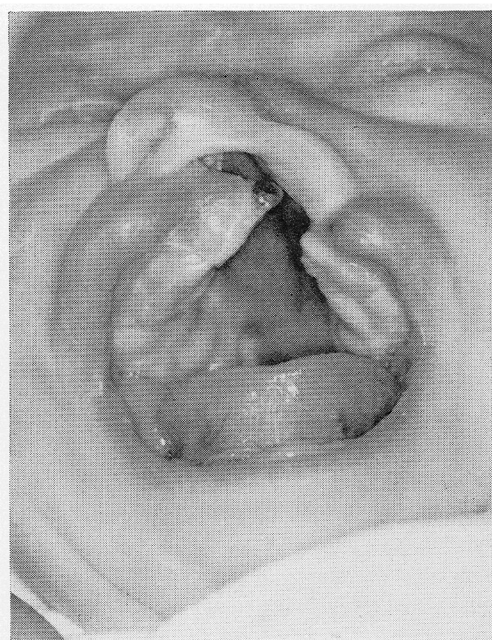


FIGURE 2. A 3-week old, cleft lip and palate closeup using the camera as positioned in Figure I.

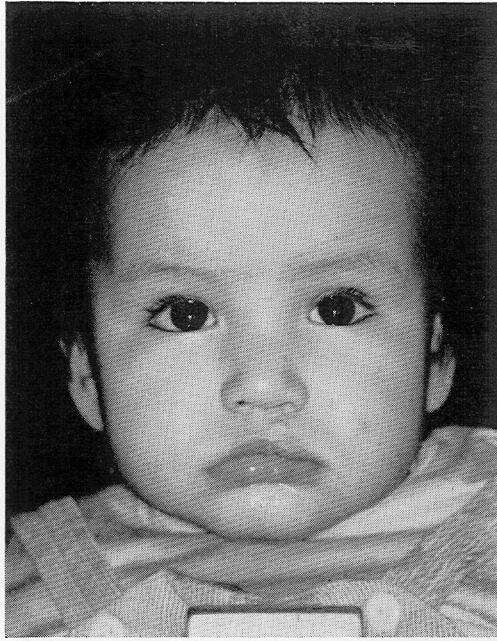


FIGURE 3. A six-month-old, repaired cleft lip. This photograph was taken in the second or full-face position with the extension bar pulled out.

3). Coupled with the simplicity of positioning is the ease with which the pictures can be made. A nurse or technician can be trained to use the camera within a matter of minutes.

The camera is a self-contained unit, and has its own light source in the form of a ring light and power pack incorporated on the camera. A standard press camera bellows with a 75 mm lens and a 4 x 5 Polaroid back is used. The cost of the camera and film is less than the cost of a good 35 mm camera with the developing, processing, filing, and viewing.

Additional information on the camera is available through the author or the Skokie Camera Shop, 8002 Lincoln Avenue, Skokie, Illinois.

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