A new strain of the non-obese diabetic mouse which develops cataracts (NOD/Ba/Lop19)

EDITOR—The non-obese diabetic (NOD) mouse is a spontaneous model of type 1 (insulin dependent) diabetes mellitus, frequently used in diabetes research.1 The colony at the medical college of St Bartholomew’s Hospital (NOD/Ba) was established in 1987 and some 55% of females and 15% of male mice spontaneously develop diabetes by 30 weeks of age.2 Cataracts are not a characteristic normally found in NOD mice but were observed during routine inspection in 1988. All animals in the strain NOD/Ba/Lop19 now spontaneously develop cataracts in both eyes (typically at 104–112 days of age). There are differences between NOD/Ba/Lop19 and the other mice of the colony with puberty, gestation period, teeth eruption, and eye opening all taking place later. Cataracts of the type seen are often the result of metabolic disturbances; however, although blood glucose levels greater than 12 mmol/l are known to cause cataracts in experimental animals,3 the development of cataracts in the NOD/Ba/Lop19 mouse colonies around the world—recent facts and figures.1993;14:193–6. 3 Scarpitta AM, Perrone P, Sinagra D. The diabetic cataract: an unusual presentation in a young subject: case report. J Diab Comp 1997;11:259–60. 4 Carroll PB, Herskowitz RD, Goodman AD, et al. Rapid onset of severe retinopathy, cataracts and neuropathy in young patients with diabetes mellitus. Acta Paediatr 1992;81:355–8.

Corticely visually impaired children

EDITOR—While Hoyt and Fredrick rightly state the heterogeneous aetiology of cortical visual impairment (CVI) in children,1 we were disappointed in their bland and unjustified dismissal of the value of electrophysiological studies in these cases. They fail to quote any electrophysiological studies more recent than 1979 in their review, of which there have been a not inconsiderable number. As for our own work we have found that a normal flash VEP indicates statistically and clinically a better prognosis in blind babies with non-ocular visual impairment even though we would concede that in some cases flash VEPs can be normal in CVI.1 It is therefore clinically useful to perform evoked potential studies in these children, a position endorsed by the commentary in the same issue of BJO,4 which states that electrophysiological investigations are mandatory in the investigation of babies with poor visual contact. We endorse this sentiment and although accepting the limitations of the technique, feel that VEP investigations provide valuable objective information in the assessment of these infants. Hoyt and Frederick rightly point out that further work is required in infant CVI but not even to attempt any review of work within the past 20 years—never mind the most recent—is at best misleading and at worst scientifically unacceptable.

Automated perimetry by optometrists in patients at low risk of glaucoma

EDITOR.—The letter by Dayan et al1 raises some interesting questions regarding the examination and referral of patients by optometrists for further investigation in relation to open angle glaucoma. While the authors base their comments upon largely anecdotal evidence from a series of only 11 subjects from one small source, there are nevertheless some important points to be answered from these comments. Firstly, the College of Optometrists guidelines offer guidance based on clinical evidence to optometrists conducting eye examinations. They specifically encourage optometrists to conduct the appropriate tests on any individual patient as a matter of best practice. In the case of glaucoma, recommendations are made that visual field tests should be conducted on subjects over the age of 40, those with a family history of glaucoma, and those with suspicious optic discs or other risk factors.

The majority of visual field tests used in optometric practice are based upon static
Editor,—I was very disappointed to read in the BMJ (a BMJ publication) an example of corrupt English usage. In the January issue, on page 71, the term viscoelastic is freely used. I presume the term is addressing the properties of a substance which has both viscous and elastic properties. The words ‘visco’ and ‘elastic’ are adjectives describing the property of a substance. It is therefore incorrect to use the terms as nouns. American English has coined the word viscoelastic and through common usage is encouraging others to adopt it. However, surely we should expect a native British journal to set a better example by using technically correct terminology.

E S ROSEN
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BOOK REVIEW


The editors of Ida Mann’s autobiography, Elizabeth Buckley and Dorothy Potter, have undertaken a task of a true devotion. Through their long standing respect and admiration for this giant of 20th century ophthalmology, the authors have successfully brought together an excellent book which reviews the somewhat meandering autobiography which Ida Mann herself wrote.

For those who are interested it is an extremely fascinating account of individuals who helped to form Ida Mann’s career from her early days at Moorfields and Oxford onto her period in Australia and the continuing research that she did there on Aboriginal demographics.

The autobiography itself provides a unique insight into the enormous energy, but even more so into the approach, which Ida Mann took to her research work. Undoubtedly, these were driven by a great interest in her topics. In addition, she paid great attention to detail and this is highlighted in the book itself with some
idsynecrotic but highly enjoyable personal references and even quotations which one must assume represent the spoken word.

There is also some rare insight into the politics involved in the emergence of early 20th century UK ophthalmology, with special reference to the difficulties and the advantages that women may have in developing medical careers—particularly in the field of ophthalmology.

Overall, this is a very enjoyable read and it can be recommended to all those interested in the history of ophthalmology.

JOHN V FORRESTER

NOTICES

Community based rehabilitation
The latest issue of the Community Eye Health (no 28) discusses community based rehabilitation in developing countries. For further information please contact Community Eye Health, International Centre for Eye Health, Institute of Ophthalmology, 11–43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9EL. (Tel: (+44) 171 608 6910; fax: (+44) 171 250 3207; email: eyeresource@ucl.ac.uk) Annual subscription £25. Free to workers in developing countries.

Residents’ Foreign Exchange Programme
Any resident interested in spending a period of up to one month in departments of ophthalmology in the Netherlands, Finland, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, France, Austria, or Portugal should apply to: Mr Robert Ache, 11–43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9EL, UK (tel: 0113-274 8855; fax: 0113-274 8800).

Royal National Institute for the Blind

Neglected Areas of Disease Burden: The Biomaterials Challenge
A workshop will be held on 30 June 1999 at the Society for Chemical Industry, 14/15 Belgrave Square, London covering five areas: ophthalmic, craniofacial, stroke, respiratory, renal, with a keynote address “Artificial vision” given by Professor Mark Humayun (Baltimore, USA). Further details: Jeanette Hawkes, The Biomaterials Partnership, LGC (Teddington) Ltd, Queens Road, Teddington, Middx TW11 0LY (tel: 0181 943 7596; fax: 0181 943 2767; email: biomaterials@lgc.co.uk).

XII Congress European Society of Ophthalmology
The XII Congress European Society of Ophthalmology will be held in Stockholm, Sweden on 27 June–1 July 1999. Further details: Congress (Sweden) AB, PO Box 5819, S-114 86 Stockholm, Sweden (tel: +46 8 459 66 00; fax: +46 8 661 91 25; email: soe@congres.se; http://www.congres.se/soe/).

British Ophthalmic Photographic Association
The British Ophthalmic Photographic Association (BOPA) will hold a workshop entitled “The other side of the chin rest” on 10 July 1999 at the Southampton Eye Unit. Topics include: consent; allergies and complications; living with visual impairment; and procedures. Cost £20. Further details: Tim Mole (tel: 01703 798747).

Vision ’99: International Conference on Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation
The International Conference on Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation will be held on 12–16 July 1999 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, New York. Further details: Lighthouse International, 111 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022-1202, USA (tel: (212) 821-9482; fax: (212) 821-9705; email: vision.99@lighthouse.org).

4th Meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society
The 4th meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society will be held on 29 August–2 September 1999 in Jerusalem. Further details: Secretariat, 4th Meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, PO Box 50006, Tel Aviv, 61500, Israel (tel: 972-3-514000; fax: 972-3-5175674/972-3-5140077; email: eunuos99@ehenes.com).

International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
The sixth general assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness will be held on 5–6 September 1999 at the Conference Centre, Beijing Friendship Hotel, Beijing, People’s Republic of China. The theme is “The right to sight”. Further details: IAPB Secretariat, LV Prasad Eye Institute, LV Prasad Marg, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500 034, India (tel: 091-40-215389; fax: 091-40-248271; email: IAPB@lvp.eye.stph.net).

Ophthalmological Clinic, University of Creteil
An international symposium on the macula will be held on 1–2 October 1999 at the Ophthalmological Clinic, University of Creteil. Further details: Professor G Soubrane, Chef de Service, Clinique Ophthalmologique Universitaire de Creteil, Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal, 40 Avenue de Verdun, 94010 Creteil, France (fax: 01 45 17 52 27).

Jules François Prize
The 2000 Jules François Prize of £100 000 for scientific research in ophthalmology will be awarded to a young scientist who has made an important contribution to ophthalmology. All topics in the field of fundamental and/or clinical research in ophthalmology will be considered. The application should be sent jointly with a curriculum vitae, the list of all publications, and three copies of the candidate’s 10 most relevant publications to Jules François Foundation Secretary, Professor Dr M Hanssens, Dienst Oogheelkunde, de Pintelaan 185, B-9000 Gent, Belgium. Deadline for applications 31 December 1999.

XXXIV Nordic Congress of Ophthalmology
The XXXIV Nordic Congress of Ophthalmology will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland, 18–21 June 2000. This meeting celebrates the 100 year anniversary of the Nordic Ophthalmology Conference. Further details: Iceland Incentives Inc, Hamraborg 1–3, Is Kopavogur, Iceland (tel: +354 554 1400; fax: +354 554 1472; email: incentiv@ttm.is).

DR-2000, International Forum on Diabetic Retinopathy
The International Forum on Diabetic Retinopathy will take place on 7–9 September 2000 at the Palazzo Reale, Naples, Italy. Further details: Francesco Bandello, Congress Secretariat, MGR Congressi, Via Servio Tullio, 4, 20123 Milano, Italy (tel: 39 02 430071; fax: 39 02 48008471; email: dr2000@mgr.it).