ANAEMIA AS AN AETIOLOGICAL FACTOR IN CONVERGENCE INSUFFICIENCY*

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In the year 1961–1962, 74 cases of convergence insufficiency were seen in the Ophthalmological Department of the Royal Victoria Infirmary (Table). It was interesting to note that the onset of symptoms amongst some of the female patients was related to incidents of anaemia. The anaemia was attributable in every case, either to a gynaecological or obstetric cause, or to the onset of physiological menstruation. Thus all the cases in which anaemia and convergence insufficiency co-existed occurred in females in the age group 10 to 45 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>No. Aged 10–45 yrs</th>
<th>No. in This Age Group with Anaemia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not unlikely that anaemia can be casually related to convergence insufficiency in view of the prevalence of various degrees of hypochromic anaemia in women of this age group. It is of interest, however, to note the onset of symptoms as a definite sequel to a haemorrhage or menstrual pathology causing anaemia. Such conditions must provide additional cause for a latent muscular imbalance to become manifest or for insufficiency to appear where no imbalance previously existed. The association of an organic debility with inadequate convergence has long been recognized and the need to correct such debility is as important in improving the convergence insufficiency as are muscular exercises. The distribution of the cases by age and sex is shown in Fig. 1 (opposite), and the proportion of anaemic cases by sex in Fig. 2 (opposite).

The anaemic cases, occurring as they do in the female group only, are statistically significant. The age distribution between the sexes in the age group 10 to 45 years has no statistical significance. However, a likely explanation of the excess of female cases under 45 years is the existence of the ten anaemic cases.

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Case Reports of Females aged 10 to 45 years

Case 1, a woman aged 33 years, complained one month after a massive post partum haemorrhage in August, 1961, of difficulty with close work, anxiety in traffic and inability to judge distances.

**Examination**

**Before Treatment**

- **REFRACTION:** Emmetropic 6/6
- **VISUAL ACUITY:** Sluggish reaction
- **PUPILS:** Latent divergence with good recovery
- **COVER TEST (near):**
- **LIVINGSTON BINOCULAR GAUGE (cm.):**
  - **ACCOMMODATION**
    - Right 19
    - Left 18
    - Binocular 16
  - **CONVERGENCE**
    - Subjective 18
    - Objective 15
  - **SYNOPTOPHORE:**
    - Full binocular vision
    - Adduction +20°
    - Abduction – 2°

**After Treatment**

- **REFRACTION:** Emmetropic 6/6
- **VISUAL ACUITY:** Brisk reactions
- **PUPILS:** No divergence
- **COVER TEST (near):**
- **LIVINGSTON BINOCULAR GAUGE (cm.):**
  - **ACCOMMODATION**
    - Right 19
    - Left 18
    - Binocular 16
  - **CONVERGENCE**
    - Subjective 18
    - Objective 15
  - **SYNOPTOPHORE:**
    - Full binocular vision
    - Adduction +40°
    - Abduction – 5°
Laboratory Investigations.—Haemoglobin below 50 per cent. after the post partum haemorrhage, now 90 per cent.

Final State.—No symptoms.

Case 2, a woman aged 34 years, complained in 1955 of headache and discomfort after close work, of 6 months' duration, following the birth of her first baby; at this time she had an attack of rubella and was anaemic.

In May, 1958, she was again anaemic; the previous symptoms recurred and she attended for treatment in January, 1959.

In June, 1961, she was again anaemic and the symptoms returned.

Laboratory Investigation.—Haemoglobin estimations varied from 50 per cent. after parturition to 85 per cent. after treatment.

Case 3, a woman aged 33 years, experienced frontal and occipital headaches and aching eyes when doing close work after the birth of her last child in October, 1961. She received irregular courses of oral iron for menorrhagia and anaemia.

Laboratory Investigations.—Present haemoglobin 75 per cent.

Final State.—Occasional symptoms.

Case 4, a woman aged 22 years, experienced headaches and diplopia for one year following parturition. She was anaemic at this time. While she was attending the Eye Department for the convergence insufficiency, she was also receiving treatment by her home doctor for her anaemia, and it was found after the second orthoptic treatment that the convergence had become normal.
ANAEMIA AND CONVERGENCE INSUFFICIENCY

Examination

Before Treatment                                      After Treatment

REFRACTION:  Emmetropic                                Emmetropic

VISUAL ACUITY:  6/5                                     6/5

COVER TEST (near):  Latent divergence with good recovery  Latent divergence with good recovery

(distance):  No deviation                              No deviation

BINOCULAR CONVERGENCE:  2° poorly maintained            1° well maintained

MADDOX WING:  Exo. 2°                                    Exo. 2°

SYNOPTOPHORE:  Simultaneous macular perception          Simultaneous macular perception

Fusion 0°                                              Fusion 0°

Adduction +20°                                         +50°

Abduction − 5°                                         − 5°

Final State.—No symptoms.

Case 5, a girl aged 13 years, complained of fatigue, frontal headaches and blurring of vision for close work, 4 months after starting menstruation at the age of 12 years.

Examination

Before Treatment                                      After Treatment

REFRACTION:  Both Eyes: +0·25 D. sph.                  Same

VISUAL ACUITY:  6/6                                     6/6

COVER TEST (near):  Latent divergence with good recovery  No deviation

(distance):  No deviation                              No deviation

BINOCULAR CONVERGENCE:  1° poorly maintained            1° well maintained

MADDOX WING  Orthophoric                               Orthophoric

SYNOPTOPHORE:  Simultaneous macular perception          Simultaneous macular perception

Fusion 0°                                              Fusion 0°

Adduction +10°                                         +50°

Abduction − 5°                                         − 5°

Final State.—No symptoms.  Present haemoglobin 75 per cent.

Since these cases were seen, two other women with convergence insufficiency have been examined, and the correction of the anaemia resulted in resolution of the ocular symptoms and return to normal of the orthoptic measurements, without orthoptic exercises.

Summary

74 cases of convergence insufficiency were examined in relation to hypochromic anaemia. The age and sex distribution and occurrence of anaemia are analysed. Anaemia occurred in a significant number of females aged 10 to 45 years.

Where convergence insufficiency appears in younger women, anaemia would seem to bear more than a casual relationship to a latent muscular imbalance, or to be a cause per se where no previous imbalance existed.

I should like to thank Mr. H. Vernon Ingram and Mr. L. H. Lake for allowing me to comment on these cases and the Misses M. F. Brown and J. F. Maughan for their observations.
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