MULTIPLE CANALICULAR CYSTS*

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CANALICULAR CYSTS, although not very rare, have been frequently reported in the literature. Duke-Elder (1952) mentioned four such cases (Santos Fernandez, 1913; Torres Estrada, 1931; Wilson, 1936; Vittadini, 1937), and others have been reported by Rubert (1934) and Sokolowski (1962). Ours is the first case to show three canalicular cysts simultaneously, and our patient had probably harboured the cysts for the longest period on record.

Case Report

A Muslim male aged 70 was admitted to the Gandhi Eye Hospital, Aligarh, on October 25, 1962, with the complaint of two globular swellings in the right eye for 19 years and one in the left eye for 6 years (Fig. 1). The swelling in the right lower lid had appeared 2 years before that in the upper lid.

FIG. 1.—Two large canalicular cystic swellings in the right eyelids and one in the left. The right lower cyst occupies almost half the lid margin and the right upper cyst about one-third.

Examination.—Both eyes were full of muco-purulent discharge without corresponding inflammatory signs. There was chronic blepharo-conjunctivitis with healed trachoma in both eyes. The medial third of the right upper lid and the medial half of the right lower lid were occupied by soft globular fluctuating swellings. The swelling in the left upper lid was similar but relatively small. The right lower punctum was blocked and on pressing either of the right swellings a slight cheesy discharge oozed from the right upper punctum (Fig. 2).

FIG. 2.—Close-up of right eyelids. Cheesy material can be seen oozing from the upper punctum. The lower punctum was blocked.

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Because of the size of the swellings in the right eye it appeared that they were diverticuli of the lacrimal sac or canaliculi.

Both corneae showed nebular and macular opacities, the anterior chambers were shallow, and early lenticular changes were present. The visual acuity was 6/36 in each eye.

Investigations.—Culture was negative for both fungi and micro-organisms after 7 days' incubation. The Kahn and Mantoux tests were negative. The stools, urine, and blood showed no abnormality.

Operations.—The left canaliculus and sac were dissected and excised on November 10, 1962. The sac and the lower canaliculus were fibrosed and the latter was completely blocked. The cyst in the left upper canaliculus measured 8×6 mm., about three times the size of the sac (Fig. 3). The contents were serous.

FIG. 3.—The canicular cyst from the left upper lid is three times the size of the fibrosed greyish-white sac seen on the right of the picture.

FIG. 4.—Two large translucent canicular cysts removed from the right lids, each joining the lacrimal sac separately.

The right sac and both the cystic canaliculi were dissected and removed together on November, 20, 1962. Each cyst measured 1.5×1.2 cm. The fibrosed shrunken sac was 1.2 cm. in length (Fig. 4). The contents were cheesy.

Result.—Both wounds healed and the discharge ceased. The patient was discharged on December 10, 1962.

Discussion

This case had several unusual features. It is the first case of multiple canicular cysts, *i.e.* three at one time. The cysts in the right eye are probably the largest so far reported, and had been present for the longest period. The number and size may be explained by a congenital weakness of the walls of the canaliculi as suggested by Torres Estrada (1931) and Vittadini (1937). Chronic infection and trachoma could help cause a passive dilatation of weak-walled canaliculi.

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