rigorously analyses the geometry of explant buckles and from that analysis concludes that the shape, or more precisely the orientation, of the explant and the length of a limbus parallel buckle explant contribute to the fishmouth phenomenon.

A meridional orientation for a silicone sponge explant is preferred to a limbus-parallel orientation; the wedge-shaped implant proposed by Pruett appears to accomplish the same as the meridional silicone sponge explant. If a sponge explant is placed in a limbus parallel direction, a length less than 90° is unlikely to produce fishmouthing, whereas a length greater than 90° is likely to produce retinal folds on the buckle and the fishmouthing phenomenon. An additional tight encircling band can exacerbate these effects.

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References

- ¹Birchall CH. The fishmouth phenomenon in retinal detachment: old concepts revisited. *Br J Ophthalmol* 1979; 63: 507-10.
- ²Pruett RC. The fishmouth phenomenon II. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1977; 95: 1782-7.
- ³Goldbaum MH, Smithline M, Poole TA, Lincoff HA. Geometric analysis of radial buckling. *Am J Ophthalmol* 1975; 79: 958-65.

SIR, I wish to thank Dr Goldbaum for his letter confirming the factors involved in the pathogenesis of the fishmouth phenomenon in retinal detachment surgery. We are in broad agreement.

My phrase 'relative to the circle of the eye that is being indented' qualifies the factor of the length of a limbus parallel buckle. I agree that a length of limbus parallel buckle of less than 90° sector is unlikely in the majority of patients to produce the phenomenon if other contributing factors are absent.

The third factor not mentioned in Dr Goldbaum's letter is the height of the buckle. This is important. Dr Goldbaum draws attention to this in his calculations in his paper¹ and he also mentions in his letter that 'an additional tight encircling band can exacerbate the effect'. Depending on the position of such an additional band this may increase the height of the buckle.

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Reference

- ¹Goldbaum MH, Smithline M, Poole TA, Lincoff HA. Geometric analysis of radial buckling. *Am J Ophthalmol* 1975; 79: 958-65.

Seasonal incidence of retinal detachment

SIR, The catchment area of the Princess Margaret Hospital, Swindon, is about 250 000 people. Between January 1973 and December 1979 (7 years) 140 patients were operated on for detached retina (all first operations). Twice as many occurred in the first 4 months of the year. There must be, as in any biological series, a monthly detached retina mean, the usual explanation being a combination of anatomical defects and physical stress. Is it possible that there is an additive due to heavy head colds? Maybe not, because November's figures for the period reviewed were the lowest of all despite the fact that 'November's chill blows loud wi' angry sugh'. Whatever the explanation, I always brace myself for a run of detachments after New Year, and it always happens.

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F. C. RODGER

Notes

All-India Ophthalmological Conference

The fortieth All-India Ophthalmological Conference will be held at Ravindra Nath Tagore Medical College, Udaipur, on 10-13 January 1981. Further details from Professor M. R. Jain, Ravindra Nath Tagore Medical College, Udaipur, Pin-313001, India.

Glaucoma symposium

The Israel International Symposium on Glaucoma will take place at Tel Aviv, Israel, on 3-5 September 1980. Details from the Secretariat, Israel International Symposium on Glaucoma, PO Box 16271, Tel Aviv, Israel..

Surgical phakia

The Rochester Eye Institute and the Department of Ophthalmology at Park Ridge Hospital, Rochester, New York, will hold the fifth annual ophthalmic seminar on 15-16 August 1980 at the Rochester Americana Hotel. Details from Ms Katherine Sgabelloni, RN Co-ordinator, Ophthalmic Services, Park Ridge Hospital, 1555 Long Pond Road, Rochester, New York 14626, USA.

American Academy of Ophthalmology

The annual meeting has been rescheduled at Chicago's McCormick Place on 2-7 November 1980. Further details from the American Academy of Ophthalmology, 1833 Fillmore Street, PO Box 7424, San Francisco, CA 94120, USA.