MAILBOX

Recurrent corneal erosion syndrome

EDITOR,—I read with interest the article by Heyworth and associates on the natural history of recurrent corneal erosion syndrome,¹ published in the January 1998 issue of *BrJO*.

However, this article raises certain issues of concern. Firstly, the title "A 4 year review of 117 patients" is misleading, since 94 patients were studied. Furthermore, the authors also state in the first sentence that epithelial basement membrane dystrophy (EBMD) is an anterior stromal dystrophy. The two are distinct clinical and pathological entities.

A further point of concern is that none of these patients was examined as to the cause of the early morning irritation, so it is not certain that their symptoms were caused by recurrence of epithelial erosions. Indeed, such symptoms could well be due to blepharitis or a multitude of other ocular disorders. There is also an inaccuracy in Table 1, which lists the percentage of symptomatic EBMD patients as 78%, when it should be 75% (21 out of 28 patients).

The authors finally state that these symptoms *could* be attributed to recurrent corneal erosion syndrome, which does not really prove anything at all.

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- 1 Heyworth P, Morlet N, Rayner S, *et al*. Natural history of recurrent erosion syndrome—a 4 year review of 117 patients. *Br J Ophthalmol* 1998;82:26-8.

Reply

EDITOR,—We thank Dr Menon for his comments on our paper on the natural history of recurrent erosion syndrome.¹

The paper sets out to review the symptomatology of a group of 117 patients who were originally recruited for Hykin's study² comparing two treatments for recurrent erosion syndrome. We contacted 94 (80%) of the original 117 that were studied. Since the original cohort was of 117 patients we do not feel that this is misleading.

We accept that the term anterior stromal might better be termed anterior dystrophy when discussing the most common causes of recurrent erosion syndrome; however, dystrophies extending to the anterior stroma such as lattice, granular, and macular may also cause a recurrent erosion syndrome—this particular group having been excluded from our study.

We accept the limitations of a telephone questionnaire in confusing symptomatology with coexisting and related disease such as blepharitis; however, the episodic and acute nature of the pain in this condition is generally characteristic. The fact that 91% of symptomatic patients complained of symptoms upon waking in the morning rather than throughout the day suggests that these symptoms were of recurrent erosion syndrome rather than blepharitis or other ocular disorders. We nevertheless accept that there may be some crossover in symptomatology among a small

number of patients when there is coexisting disease.

There are no other natural history studies available on this condition which is known to be chronic and recurrent. The authors hope that other readers will find the data useful despite what we believe are minor deficiencies in the study.

There is an inaccuracy in Table 1. The percentage of symptomatic EBMD patients is 75% (21 out of 28 patients); this error was made at the proof reading stage and we thank Dr Menon for pointing this out.

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- 1 Heyworth P, Morlet N, Rayner S, *et al*. Natural history of recurrent erosion syndrome—a 4 year review of 117 patients. *Br J Ophthalmol* 1998;82:26-8.
- 2 Hykin PG, Foss AE, Pavesio C, *et al*. The natural history and management of recurrent erosion: a prospective randomised trial. *Eye* 1994;8:35-40.

NOTICES

External eye infections

The latest issue of *Community Eye Health* (no 30) discusses external infections of the eye. Included are papers on conjunctivitis, corneal ulcer, and transmission and control of infection. 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 6909/6910/6923; 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 Acheson, Secretary of the Foreign Exchange Committee, European Board of Ophthalmology, Institute of Ophthalmology, University College Dublin, 60 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, Ireland.

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.

Joachim Kuhlmann Fellowship for Ophthalmologists 2000

The Joachim Kuhlmann AIDS Foundation, Essen, Germany, is sponsoring two fellowships per year for ophthalmologists at a well known institute, who want to train in CMV retinitis and other HIV related ophthalmological diseases. The fellowships are valued at \$US5000 each. Deadlines for applications are 31 January and 31 July. Detailed applications, including CV and publication list, should be sent to the Joachim Kuhlmann AIDS Foundation, Bismarckstrasse 55, 45128 Essen, Germany (tel: 0201 87910-87; fax: 0201 87910-99; email: jk-stiftung@t-online.de).

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@itn.is).

Vith Mediterranean Ophthalmological Society

The combined meeting of the Vith Mediterranean Ophthalmological Society and the Vith Michaelson Symposium on Ocular Circulation and Neovascularisation will be held in Jerusalem on 21-26 May 2000. Further details: Secretariat, c/o Unitours Israel Ltd, PO Box 3190, 61031 Tel Aviv, Israel (tel: +972-3-5209999; fax: +972-3-5239099; email: meetings@unitours.co.il).

The Vith Michaelson medal and award will be delivered on 24 May 2000 in Jerusalem. The medal and award (\$15 000 monetary prize) are sponsored by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and by the Hadassah Hebrew University Hospital and Medical School of Jerusalem, Israel. Nominations are sought from the ophthalmic community at large. Suggestions and reasons for choice and CV highlights should be sent to Professor David BenEzra, Secretary for the International Nominating Committee, Pediatric Ophthalmology Unit, Hadassah Hebrew University Hospital, PO Box 12000, Jerusalem 91120, Israel.

5th International Vitreoretinal Meeting—IIV 2000

The 5th International Vitreoretinal Meeting—IIV 2000 will be held in Parma, Italy, on 26-27 May 2000. The main topics will include "Hypotony and glaucoma in vitreoretinal surgery", "Internal limiting membrane surgery", "Macula oedema", "Open globe injuries", and "News in retinal pigment epithelium". Further details: C Cantu, MA De Giovanni, or S Tedesco, Scientific Secretariat, Institute of Ophthalmology, University of Parma, Via Gramsci 14, 43100 Parma, Italy (tel: ++39 0521 259106; fax: ++39 0521 292358; email: nuzzi@ipr.univ.cce.unipr.it).

13th Annual Meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons

The 13th annual meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons will be held on 15-18 June 2000 at the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg, Germany. Further details: MCN Medizinische Congress-organisation Nuremberg AG, Zerzabelshofstrasse 29, D-90478

Nurnberg, Germany (tel: +49-911-3931621; fax +49-911-3931620; email: doerflinger@mcn-nuernberg.de).

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).

12th Afro-Asian Congress of Ophthalmology

The 12th Afro-Asian Congress of Ophthalmology (Official Congress for the Afro-Asian

Council of Ophthalmology) will be held on 11–15 November 2000 in Guangzhou (Canton), China. The theme is “Advances of ophthalmology and the 21st century”. Further details: Professor Lezheng Wu, Zhongshan Eye Center, SUMS, New Building, Room 919, 54 Xianlie Nan Road, Guangzhou 510060, PR China (tel: +86-20-8760 2402; fax: +86-20-8777 3370; email: lwuicv@gzsums.edu.cn).

Singapore National Eye Centre 10th Anniversary International Congress

The Singapore National Eye Centre 10th Anniversary International Congress will be held in conjunction with 3rd World Eye Surgeons Society International Meeting on 2–4 December 2000 at the Shangri-La Hotel,

Singapore. Further details: The Organising Secretariat, 11 Third Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168751 (tel: (65) 2277255; fax: (65) 2277290; internet: www.snec.com.sg).

CORRECTION

An error occurred in the August issue of the *BJO*. An item by Keunen *et al* was published incorrectly as a letter (1999;**83**:987–8) when it should have appeared as a commentary. It is reproduced in this issue as a commentary on p 1212.