Correspondence

Ophthalmic survey of a diabetic clinic

SIR, we read with interest the comprehensive reports by Grey *et al.*^{1,2} on the ophthalmic survey of a diabetic clinic. The implications for referral policy and general eye care planning in such communities are extremely important. The authors express their satisfaction over the existing referral system,² and this conclusion is based on their results as shown in Table 2 of the above paper. They state that a 'lower prevalence of most forms of diabetic retinopathy was found in those patients who had not had their eyes previously examined by an ophthalmologist.'

In their results and table, however, information on the duration of the diabetes in each group has been omitted. As this information has a paramount importance and the correlation between duration of the disease and the finding of retinopathy was clearly described in the authors' previous report,¹ it is surprising that this information was not referred to in the results.

We feel that inclusion of these data might have added an additional, valuable parameter which could have changed the impression of the casual reader that patients under ophthalmologists care are more prone to exhibit diabetic retinopathy than diabetics not so examined.

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References

- 1 Grey RHB, Malcolm N, O'Reilly D, Morris A. Ophthalmic Survey of a diabetic clinic: I. Ocular findings *Br J Ophthalmol* 1986; 70: 797-803.
- 2 Grey RHB, Morris A. Ophthalmic survey of a diabetic clinic: II. *Br J Ophthalmol* 1986; 70: 804-7.

SIR, Thank you for the opportunity to reply to the query posed by Rosenblat, David, and Yassur. The point they make regarding the prevalence of retinopathy with increasing duration of diabetes is important and is universally recognised. As they noted, the first part of our publication included information on this aspect of our findings.

In answer to their specific question Table 1 may be helpful. This information was not included in the original paper because the incidence of retinopathy was considered

to be higher in the group of patients who had previously been examined by an ophthalmologist, as the presence of retinopathy was likely to be a criterion for referral. As can be seen from Table 1, the prevalence of retinopathy increases for both groups with increasing duration of disease, which is not surprising.

The point that we were trying to convey was that current referral practices in the population studied appeared to satisfactorily identify those with proliferative retinopathy but tended to miss a number of patients with maculopathy.

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Obituary

Herbert Fitzroy Townsend MacFetridge, DSO, TD, MA, MB, BCH, DOMS

Mr H F T MacFetridge died on 20 July 1987. Born in 1915, the son of an ophthalmic surgeon, he qualified at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1937. After house appointments in the Royal Sussex County Hospital he obtained a regular commission in the Indian Medical Service.

He served in the Western Desert as regimental medical officer to the 51st Commando and then as DADMS to the 14th Indian Field Ambulance, where he was awarded the DSO for gallantry in the field. After the war Mac trained at Birmingham Eye Hospital and Bristol Eye Hospital, during which time he was also active in the Territorial Army RAMC and was awarded the Territorial Decoration in 1962. He was appointed consultant surgeon in 1955 to the Victoria Eye Hospital in Hereford, retiring in 1979.

A past president of the Midland Ophthalmological Society and vice-president of the Hereford and Worcester St John Ambulance Brigade, he was also honoured by being made a freeman of the City of Hereford on his retirement. Though his interest lay mainly in his work, he found relaxation in reading and gardening but also played an excellent game of squash right into his 60s. His administrative skills made him a popular and outstanding chairman of the Hereford Medical Executive Committee, where he always demonstrated remarkable foresight.

He is survived by his wife Margaret, also an ophthalmologist, who always accompanied him to the various society meetings, and a son and a daughter. SM

Table

Years diabetic	% Retinopathy	
	Previous examination	No previous examination
<5	21	14
5-	43	19
10-	54	40
15-	67	50
20+	83	52
Total	52	22

Note

Ocular trauma conference

The First International Ocular Trauma Conference will be held on 7-22 April 1988 at Chengchow, the People's Republic of China, sponsored by the World Eye Foundation. For further information contact Donald R May, MD, Tulane University Medical School, 1430 Tulane Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112, USA.