Viscoelastic agents in ocular surgery

Sir,—Lavin and Khaw have drawn attention to the use of viscoelastic agents for improving visualisation during ocular surgery.1 One problem that occurs is when during ocular examination or surgery the internal view is obscured by phenylephrine epitheliopathy.2 A use for hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose (HPMC) 2%, not mentioned by Lavin and Khaw, is when during ocular examination or surgery the internal view is obscured by phenylephrine epitheliopathy.3 Application of a layer of HPMC 2% or sodium hyaluronate to the cornea results in a marked improvement in corneal clarity, which may be enough to prevent epithelial debridement having to be performed.

J D STEVENS
Moorfields Eye Hospital,
City Road, London EC1V 2PD


Reply

Sir,—We did not specifically mention phenylephrine epitheliopathy when we outlined the use of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC) to prevent corneal opacification, but would fully agree with Mr Stevens. In our experience the use of HPMC does improve the view through the cornea which may otherwise be obscured by topical drug induced epitheliopathy. With the use of HPMC on the cornea we have never had to perform an epithelial debridement on an eye with eyedrop-induced epitheliopathy during cataract surgery.

P T KHAW
Institute of Ophthalmology,
Cayton Street,
London EC1V 9AT
M J LAVIN
Moorfields Eye Hospital,
City Road,
London EC1V 2PD