Iris crystals in chronic iridocyclitis

EDITOR,—I read with interest the article by Lam et al.1 They describe iris crystals and keratic precipitates in anterior uveitis without hypergammaglobulinemia. However, they did not study the aqueous humour, which might have shown dysproteins hydra as described by Behrens-Baumann et al.2 We studied crystalline deposits in the anterior chamber without iridocyclitis. Using two dimensional microthin layer chromatography, samples of aqueous humour revealed a protein of molecular weight about 110 000 and an isoelectric point of 7–8 non-specifically and regularly.

We suggest using electrophoresis of the aqueous humour to study the possible nature of the crystals seen on the iris and lens surface as well as retrocorneally.

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Reply

EDITOR,—I appreciate the comments made by Dr Behrens-Baumann regarding the use of chromatography to analyse the aqueous humour from eyes with iris crystals. However, some of the differences between our series of cases of crystalline deposits in the anterior chamber should be noted.1,2 The cases reported by Behrens-Baumann et al are familial and appear autosomal dominant, whereas the cases reported by us are associated with chronic iridocyclitis.2 Furthermore, in the cases reported by Behrens-Baumann et al, the crystalline deposits are present on the corneal endothelium and the anterior surface of the lens capsule. In our cases, the crystalline deposits are in the iris stroma.3 In addition, we have previously reported that hypergamma-B-globulinemia may be present in some of the cases of iris crystals.4 However, Behrens-Baumann et al did not describe any serumological abnormalities in their cases.

It is intriguing to think that there may be a common pathogenetic pathway in all these cases, leading to the formation of crystalline deposits in the anterior chamber. Although analysis of the aqueous humour was not performed in our report, I agree with Behrens-Baumann that it is possible that dysproteins hydra may be present in some of our cases. I am grateful that Behrens-Baumann has pointed out some of the underlying features in the crystal literature.

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orientation of edges (that is, the outline shape) defining the units remains constant. The orientation of these quasi three dimensional units is specified by lightness differences between the ‘faces’ of each unit. In this way this third process, which is based on the interpretation of projected shapes, is allied to grouping processes. However, it appears to require a greater focus of attention.

The second chapter, by L Stark and colleagues, describes experiments which attempt to characterise patterns of visual search and search strategies. For many years this field of research has been important for military and surveillance applications and man-machine interfaces. In contrast to Beck’s emphasis on early visual processing, Stark et al argue that cognitive factors in search tasks may be much more important than the specific conditions of viewing or the characteristics of particular images. This hypothesis was investigated by comparing visual search strategies for randomly distributed targets in two dimensional landscape displays with those observed when targets were distributed in meaningful locations in similar displays viewed more naturally - that is, stereoscopically. Search strategies for the two types of display differed dramatically. When targets were distributed randomly, visual search ranged methodically over the image and performance was determined by traditional image characteristics of clutter, contrast, etc. For meaningfully located targets viewed stereoscopically, search strategies were apparently dependent on cognitive models of the spatial distribution of targets in the scene, with eye movements concentrated around the natural features of the image such as roads, houses and landscape contours; as might be expected in a cognitive task, search performance improved through learning and with familiarisation with the images. That there are differences between the two types of display is perhaps not surprising, but the contrast which Stark et al portray the significant relevance of detailed visual processing models in many applied situations.

The book concludes with a summary of what appears to have been a rather anarchic workshop session. Contradictions, inadequacies of models, and assumptions in several areas were discussed; these included the field of attention, the postulated guidance role of peripheral vision during visual search, the validity of using eye position data as markers of the site of information gathering and of the duration of a fixation as a measure of information processing load. Did this debate expose some disillusionment with the inability to forge common ground between theoretical and applied aspects of visual research? Possibly so, but it seems clear that those attending the conference remain excited by the challenge.

BARNABY REEVES

NOTICES

MSc/Membership Course in Ophthalmology, University of Bristol at Bristol Eye Hospital

Applications are invited for a course in ophthalmology for the degree of MSc by advanced study in research over three academic terms. A short 6 month course is available in preparation for the membership of the Royal College of Ophthalmology. For details: Professor D L Easby, Department of Ophthalmology, Bristol Eye Hospital, Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol BS1 2LX, England.

T raumatic Optic Neuropathy - Clinical Trial

A clinical trial to study traumatic optic neuropathy is to take place randomising to mega-dose steroids alone v megadose steroids with extracranial optic nerve decompression. For details: Michael Joseph, MD, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, 243 Charles St, Boston, MA, 02114, USA. (Tel: 617-573-3192; Fax: 617-573-3914.)

XIIIth Congress of the International Society of Geographical Ophthalmology

The XIIIth Congress of the International Society of Geographical Ophthalmology will be held on 1 and 2 July 1994 at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal, Canada. Further details: Professor Gordon Johnson, Secretary, ISGO, International Centre for Eye Health, 11-43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9EJ. (Tel: (71) 608 6007; Fax: (71) 250 3207.)

International Symposium on Optics, Imaging, and Instrumentation

An international symposium on optics, imaging, and instrumentation will be held 24-29 July 1994 at the San Diego Convention Center and Marriott Hotel and Marina, CA, USA. Further details: SPIE, PO Box 10, Bellingham, WA 98227-0010, USA. (Tel: 206/676-3290.)

American Academy of Ophthalmology

The third annual summer institute will be held the weekend of 5-7 August 1994, in Seattle, Washington at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers. Further details: Samuel M, American Academy of Ophthalmology, 655 Beach Street, San Francisco, CA 94109-1336, USA. (Tel: (415) 561-8515.)

Welsh Cataract Congress 1994

The Welsh Cataract Congress 1994 will be held on 8-10 September 1994. Details from: Eula MacChilds, coordinator, Cullen Eye Institute, Baylor College of Medicine, 6501 Fannin, NC200, Houston, TX 77030, USA. (Tel: (713) 798-5941; Fax: (713) 798-4564.)

Frontiers in Penetrating Keratoplasty

The German Ophthalmological Society will hold an international symposium on ‘Frontiers in penetrating keratoplasty’ on 22-24 September 1994 in Heidelberg, Germany. Further details: Prof Dr R Sundmacher, University Eye Hospital, Moorwenstrasse 5, 40225 Dusseldorf, Germany.

Screening for diabetic retinopathy in Europe: four years since the London protocols

Protocols to screen for and treat diabetic retinopathy were agreed upon on 9-10 October 1990 in London, as a step towards implementing the Saint Vincent Declaration and, in particular, its target of reducing new blindness due to diabetes by one third or more in the next five years. These protocols have been widely distributed with the help of the European Office of the World Health Organisation, the European Region of the International Diabetes Federation and the European Association for the Study of Diabetes. Time is about ripe to assess how much work has been done and to decide whether the protocols need to be updated or modified.

A new meeting is being organised for this purpose. It will be held on 25-26 September 1994 in Turin, Italy, as a satellite event to the 30th annual meeting of the EASD and will be organised jointly by the Working Group on Blindness of the WHO/IDF Saint Vincent Declaration Initiative and the Study Group on Eye Complications of the EASD (EASDEC). Further details: Massimo Porta, MD, PhD, Istituto di Medicina Interna, Universita di Torino, Corso AM Dogliotti 14, 1-10126 Turin, Italy. (Tel: +39 11 6653318; Fax: +39 11 6634751.)

British and Eire Association of Vitreo-Retinal Surgeons

The next meeting of the British and Eire Association of Vitreo-Retinal Surgeons (BEAVRS) will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Bristol, on 20-21 October 1994. Further details: Mr R H B Grey, Bristol Eye Hospital, Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol BS1 2LX. (Tel: 0722-230060; Fax: 0722-284686.)

Third International Symposium on Ocular Inflammation

The 3rd international symposium on ocular inflammation will be held on 22-25 October 1994 in Fukaura, Japan. Further details: Registration Secretary, c/o JTB Communications Inc, New Kyoto Center Building, 5J, Shinjuku, Shinmachi, Shimogyo-ku Kyoto 600, Japan.

The First Asia-Pacific Symposium on Visual Sciences

The First Asia-Pacific Symposium on Visual Sciences (1st APSVS) will be held in Guangzhou, China, on 2-5 November 1994. It is also a satellite symposium for the Third Congress of the Federation of Asian and Oceanian Physiological Societies. For further details: Professor De-Zheng Wu, Eye Research Institute, Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center, Sun Yat-Sen University of Medical Sciences, 54 Xianlie Road, Guangzhou 510060, PR China. (Tel: +86-20-777 3370; Fax: +86-20-777 5271.)

International Society for Clinical Electrophysiology of Vision

The 33rd ISCEV symposium will be held in Athens, Greece, 16-20 June 1995. The congress is organized by the International Society for Clinical Electrophysiology of Vision. Further details: Secretariat, Erasmus Conference Centre, International Congress Organisers, 227 Kifissias Ave, 14551 Kifissia, Greece. (Tel: (01) 6125022/3, 8034004; Fax: (01) 6125021.)