LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Laceration of the eye with a fishing hook

EDITOR,—Perforation of the eye is a challenging emergency in ophthalmology and requires immediate treatment. Visual outcome after penetrating injuries with and without intraocular foreign bodies depends on the visual acuity after injury, age of patient, and the severity of the ocular trauma.1 We report a case of globe laceration following an accident with a fishing hook which was successfully treated without surgery.

CASE REPORT
A 12 year old boy presented with visual disturbance and a small lid wound on the left eye at our emergency department. He had been playing with a fishing rod while sitting on a tree, and was trying to hook fruit on the ground. The line recoiled swiftly and pierced the upper lid of the left eye. He jumped from the tree and the hook jerked itself out of the boy’s eye. A small wound of the left upper lid was found. The visual acuity was 20/20 in the right eye and 20/25 in the left eye. The anterior segment and the intraocular pressure were normal. The fundus of the right eye was normal. The fundus of the left eye showed a mild localized vitreous haemorrhage superotemporal near the temporal vessels. From there the scleral rupture went straight up to the equator. Partially orbital fat could be seen through the wound gap (Fig 1A). The ultrasound disclosed a partly detached vitreous with adherence at the site of penetration (Fig 1B). No foreign body was detected by the orbital computed tomograph scan. The patient was admitted to hospital for 8 days and treated with intravenous antibiotics during 1 week followed by an oral antibiotic in the second week. He also received cortisone systemically for 10 days. Three weeks later the visual acuity was 20/20. On funduscopy a sclerocchoroidal scar was disclosed. The edges of the retinal tear were attached and vitreous haemorrhage was completely dissolved (Fig 2). After 1 year of follow up the situation remained unchanged.

COMMENT
Although penetrating injuries of the posterior segment often require surgical treatment (that is, pars plana vitrectomy), in this case antibiotic therapy was used in order to prevent an endophthalmitis2 in combination with orally administered cortisone to reduce the inflammatory reaction. Because of an excellent fundus view, postponing surgery seems to be more appropriate, since surgery implies additional risks (for example, cataract formation, retinal detachment, etc) for the eye.3 Significant predictors for a final visual acuity of 20/50 or better are a visual acuity of 20/800 or better and youth (<18 years).4 In a mammalian study it was disclosed that simple penetration of the equator with vitreous loss does not lead to retinal detachment.5 An intact tamponading vitreous at the time of injury seems to prevent fibrous ingrowth due to anti-proliferative effects of the hyalocytes.6 The findings of this case suggest that surgery is not the first treatment strategy for similar penetrations of the posterior segment.

RALF KROTT
K ULRICH BARTZ-SCHMIDT
KLUS HEIMANN
Department of Vitreoretinal Surgery, University of Cologne, Germany

Correspondence to: Ralf Krott, MD, Department of Vitreoretinal Surgery, University of Cologne, Joseph-Stelzmann-Strasse 9, D-50924 Cologne, Germany.

Accepted for publication 11 June 1999


Intraocular infestation with the worm, Thelazia callipaeda

EDITOR,—Ocular infections with helminthic parasites are well described. The commonest organism are filarial worms that reside in subcutaneous tissue, and are found as skin infestations or masses in the lids. Some are known to live freely in the conjunctival sac. Worms that are visible to the naked eye are often referred to as “conjunctival worms”, and are in the larval or adult stage of their life cycle. Thelazia callipaeda, or the oriental eye worm, is a spiruroid nematode which is the causative organism in thelaziasis, a well described condition affecting the external eye.1 It is primarily a parasite of the conjunctiva in dogs, and is also found in rabbits and humans.2 Its presence in the conjunctival sac causes lacrimation and irritation, and its frequent excursions across the cornea may cause marked discomfort and, eventually, corneal scarring. The worm also causes paralytic ectropion through its presence in the lower fornix. At least 40 cases of infection in humans have been described from China, Japan, India, Russia, Thailand, and Korea. All of these reports extraocular infection only. We report the first case of Thelazia callipaeda to cause intraocular infection.

CASE REPORT
A 21 year old Chinese woman presented to the ophthalmology department at Shantou Central Hospital, Guangdong, China, complaining of decreased vision in her right eye on February 19, 2002. She had no photopsia or field loss, and no pain, redness, or discharge. She had no past ocular or medical history, and was otherwise well.

On examination she had a visual acuity of 6/60 in the right eye, and 6/6 in the left eye. There was no external evidence of trauma; the lids were healthy, the conjunctiva white, the cornea clear, and the anterior chamber quiet. A mild vitreous haze obscured the foveal view, and irritation of the fundus view was evident.

The woman was admitted to hospital for 8 days and treated with intravenous antibiotics during 1 week followed by an oral antibiotic in the second week. She also received oral cortisone systemically for 10 days. Three weeks later the visual acuity was 20/20. On funduscopy a chorioretinal scar was disclosed. The edges of the retinal tear were attached and vitreous haemorrhage was completely dissolved (Fig 2). After 1 year of follow up the situation remained unchanged.

The ultrasound disclosed a partly detached vitreous with adherence at the site of penetration (Fig 1B). No foreign body was detected by the orbital computed tomograph scan. The patient was admitted to hospital for 8 days and treated with intravenous antibiotics during 1 week followed by an oral antibiotic in the second week. He also received cortisone systemically for 10 days. Three weeks later the visual acuity was 20/20. On funduscopy a sclerocchoroidal scar was disclosed. The edges of the retinal tear were attached and vitreous haemorrhage was completely dissolved (Fig 2). After 1 year of follow up the situation remained unchanged.


Intraocular infestation with the worm, Thelazia callipaeda
Thelazia callipaeda (magnification ×10). Figure 1

Thelazia callipaeda (Fig 1), is quite frequently found within the eye and causes major tissue destruction. Structurally, one of its most distinguishing features is the presence of rows of curved hooks and posteriorly angled spines in a cuff around the mouth used for boring into tissue. T. callipaeda does not possess the organs to enable it to burrow through or bore its way into any body structure.

Little is known about the life cycle of Thelazia. The intermediate host is Ameiva variegata, a fly of the Drosophila family. It is known to infect the lacrimal sac, from where it passes into the conjunctival sac. It is probably deposited in the larval form by flies settling on the eyes and this accounts for extraocular infection. The adult worm in our patient’s eye was fully developed and healthy. It had caused little inflammatory response, and appeared to thrive in the conditions provided by the vitreous cavity, suggesting the possibility of immune privilege. We cannot explain how this worm entered the eye. We put forward the suggestion that humans may be the definitive host, with dogs and rabbits being the reservoir. For intraocular colonisation, the infective stage is probably the filariform larva, the portal of entry being the skin. An alternative mode of infection may be as the larva or embryonated egg ingested with raw drinking water.

COMMENT

Thelazia callipaeda (운이목, to suck) is a member of the phylum Nematoda, order Spirurida, suborder Spirurata, superfamily Spiruroidea. Adult worms look like creamy white threads; males are 4.5–13 mm long and 0.25–0.75 mm in diameter; females are larger, ranging from 6.2 to 17 mm in length and 0.3 to 0.85 mm in diameter (Fig 1). T. callipaeda is an unsegmented invertebrate with distinct oral and anal parts. The male is identifiable by its curved posterior (Fig 2A). In both the male and the female, the mouth is without lips (Fig 2B) and consists of two concentric rings of flattened papillae around a central opening. It should be noted that there are no hooks or sharp spines in the mouth or elsewhere on the body, and this raises the question of how this worm entered the eye.

Onchocerca volvulus, a close relative of Thelazia, is quite frequently found within the eye and causes major tissue destruction. Structurally, one of its most distinguishing features is the presence of rows of curved hooks and posteriorly angled spines in a cuff around the mouth used for boring into tissue. T. callipaeda does not possess the organs to suck. For intraocular colonization, the infective stage is probably the filariform larva, the portal of entry being the skin. An alternative mode of infection may be as the larva or embryonated egg ingested with raw drinking water.

Thelazia callipaeda (magnification ×1000). Figure 2

Macular dystrophy of malattia leventinese. A 25 year follow up

EDITOR—Macular degeneration is a clinical term used to describe a variety of diseases characterised by progressive loss of central vision associated with abnormalities of Bruch’s membrane and the retinal epithelium. This dominantly inherited disorder, characterised by a radial pattern of innumerable small elongated basal laminar drusen, was initially reported in a family from the Leventine Valley (Switzerland). The gene responsible for autosomal dominant malattia leventinese has been mapped to the short arm of chromosome 2p16–21. We report the case of a woman who developed unusual complications associated with this disease during a 25 year follow up.

CASE REPORT

In 1973, ophthalmological examination led to a diagnosis of bilateral hereditary macular dystrophy (malattia leventinese) in a woman born in 1943. Her visual acuity was then 20/20 for both eyes without any correction (Fig 1A).

In 1981, subfoveal neovascularisation led to an irreversible decrease in visual acuity in her right eye, down to 20/1000 (Fig 1B). In 1996, a dense right vitreous haemorrhage led to a further decrease in acuity. After resorption, fundus examination disclosed an advanced stage of the macular disease with irregular subretinal metaplasia, hyperplasia of the retinal pigment epithelium and discrete radial basal laminar drusen (Fig 2A). The fundus also showed a wedge-shaped superotemporal area with intraretinal haemorrhages, hard exudates, and sheathed vessels. The fluorescein angiogram showed telangiectatic vessels, shunt vessels, and microaneurysms, in addition to neovascularisation (Fig 2B). After laser photocoagulation, no further intraretinal haemorrhage episode occurred. The left eye had a visual acuity of 20/30 and fundus examination revealed a macula identical to that of the right eye, without complication.

COMMENT

Malattia leventinese, the maculopathy is characterised by a radial pattern of innumerable small elongated basal laminar drusen. This maculopathy has been described in a 15 year old patient. The visual acuity of patients suffering from malattia leventinese, however, remains good for quite a long time. Thus, most patients are asymptomatic until the fourth or fifth decade of life, at which point they have a variety of symptoms, including decreased visual acuity, paracentral scotomas, photophobia, and metamorphopsia. The main complication is macular subretinal neovascularisation, reported in some patients. In our present case, such macular subretinal neovascularisation caused a severe decrease in visual acuity down to 20/1000 in 1981. The contralateral eye was unaffected, fortunately conserving an acuity of 20/30.
We have here described the first example of peripheral retinal neovascularisation with ischaemia. The aetiology of this ischaemia probably concerns a retinal vein branch occlusion not linked with macular degeneration. The occlusion had developed very discreetly, with the patient aware of no functional sign. In fact, visual acuity was already severely impaired by the neovascular complication of the macula and only the nasal visual field was affected, whence the lack of ocular disturbance. No aetiology could be found for the occlusion. A general check up showed no systemic abnormality.

Thus, this observation suggests the need for great attention to be paid to the retinal periphery in patients suffering from macular dystrophy, whether hereditary or not, so as to prevent the development of potentially serious complications.

Acute central retinal vein occlusion successfully treated with intravenous thrombolysis

EDITOR—Central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) is a condition which often has profound effects on vision. At present there is little to offer patients in the form of treatment to preserve vision. The visual outcome is largely determined by the severity and duration of the vein occlusion. Management is currently aimed at preventing the complications secondary to retinal ischaemia. The incidence of fellow eye involvement with CRVO is believed to be in the order of 1%. We present a patient with “second eye” CRVO, who presented with acute reduction in vision and who responded dramatically to intravenous streptokinase.

CASE REPORT

A 75 year old white man noticed a sudden reduction in vision in his right eye while walking up a hill. He already had poor vision in his left eye from a CRVO 6 years earlier. He went immediately to eye casualty and was seen within 2 hours from the onset of symptoms. His only risk factor for vein occlusion was atheromatous retinal haemorrhage treated with timoptol 0.25% twice daily to both eyes.

On examination, visual acuities were 6/36 right eye and counting fingers left eye, there was no relative afferent pupillary defect and intraocular pressures were 21 mm Hg in both eyes. Examination of the right fundus revealed scattered tiny blot haemorrhages and tortuous veins.

A fundus fluorescein angiogram showed pulsatile arterial filling with venous filling delayed until 34.6 seconds (Fig 1). A diagnosis of acute central retinal vein occlusion was made. Because of the previous left CRVO and the short history of symptoms in his right eye, the option of thrombolysis was carefully discussed with the patient, including the small risk of cerebral haemorrhage. Streptokinase, 1.5 \times 10^6 units, was infused 7 hours after the onset of symptoms. Within 30 minutes, his visual acuity had improved to 6/9. The patient was empirically anticoagulated with heparin and warfarin, keeping the international normalised ratio between 2 and 3. Repeat fluorescein angiogram showed marked improvement in venous filling and loss of pulsatile arterial filling. In addition, several post thrombolysis haemorrhages were evident (Fig 2). The patient took warfarin for 9 months in total and now remains on aspirin alone. His vision in the right eye remains at 6/9.

COMMENT

Central retinal vein occlusion can profoundly affect vision and lead to neovascular complications. Current therapeutic options are limited mainly to the prevention or treatment of secondary complications.

Evidence for thrombus formation in CRVO has been reported by Green et al in a prospective histopathological study of patients with CRVO. They demonstrated recanalised thrombus in 89.7% of eyes and fresh thrombus formation in the remaining 10.3%.

Animal studies have shown encouraging responses to thrombolysis in experimental...
CRVO. Fibrinolysin given within 2 days of experimental vein occlusion in rabbits was shown to result in resolution of retinal haemorrhages and return of normal retinal circulation within 48 hours. Similar animal studies using recombinant tissue plasminogen activator shortly after experimentally induced vein occlusion resulted in significant retinal vein patency in treated eyes. In one randomised controlled clinical trial, patients with CRVO who received streptokinase followed by full anticoagulation within 7 days of onset of visual symptoms, showed a statistically significant improvement in visual acuity. Late presentation was identified as a possible cause of limited improvement in some cases. Reports of vitreous haemorrhage occurring during treatment (3/20 cases) together with the reported incidence of cerebral haemorrhage with streptokinase (57/13607 cases) account for the absence of a defined role of this drug in the treatment of vein occlusions.

Selective cannulation of a branch retinal vein and infusion of tissue plasminogen activator in a patient with a non-acute CRVO in the second eye has been described. Several other treatment modalities had already been tried unsuccessfully. While avoiding systemic complications, the treatment failed to show any objective improvement in visual acuity and the patient subsequently went on to develop angle neovascularisation.

Clearly many vein occlusions present late, where irreversible retinal damage has occurred. We propose that only in those circumstances where the presentation is acute should the use of intravenous thrombolysis be considered.

M T J COSTEN
W B M DONALDSON
J A OLSON

Department of Ophthalmology, University of Aberdeen, Foresterhill, Aberdeen AB25 2ZB

Correspondence to: Dr J Olson.

Accepted for publication 26 April 1999


Retinitis pigmentosa with visual fluctuations and arrestin gene mutation

EDITOR,—We report a case of retinitis pigmentosa with day to day visual fluctuations and a mutation in the arrestin gene.

CASE REPORT
A 45 year old Japanese man first noticed night blindness at junior high school age, followed by a slowly progressive loss of visual acuities and fields. At presentation, the best visual acuity was 10/200 in each eye. Goldmann perimetrries revealed generalised narrowing of the peripheral field and marked loss of central visual sensitivities. Bright flash electroretinogram (ERG) in a fully dark adapted state was not recordable in either eye. Ophthalmoscopy revealed advanced stage of retinitis pig- mentosa (Fig 1). There was no Mizuo’s phenomenon in the fundus. This patient reported that he had felt relatively better vision (“good day”) on every other day that alternated with worse vision (“bad day”). Furthermore, he claimed that bad day was repeated after physical stress or alcohol drink- ing, followed by a good day to return to the ordinary cycle. In our 10 years’ observation, the profile of day to day variation was reproducible. To quantitatively assess the characteristic visual symptoms, perimetric tests were performed in both the centre and periphery using an automated perimeter on eight different days in a period of 2 months, half on a good day and the other half on a bad day; ERG examinations were also performed. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the results, demonstrat- ing that the visual sensitivity in the peripheral field varied in a manner consistent with the patient’s reports, although not obvious in the central field. In contrast with

10 2 14

MS1 = 0.8
MS2 = 1.2
MS3 = 2.8
MS4 = 4.2

Normal
Abs defect
Rel defect

Figure 2 Visual field sensitivity, determined by an automated perimeter (Interzeag Octopus 101, low vision program) on different days. Representative visual field charts (right eye) obtained on a “good day” (left chart) and a “bad day” (right chart).

Figure 1 Fundus in the right (A) and left (B) eye of the patient. There are diffuse chorioretinal atrophies accompanied by numerous bone spicule pigments, attenuated retinal vessels, and pale optic discs.
here had advanced retinitis pigmentosa and reported that he had experienced over the years alternating days of good and bad vision and that the day to day visual fluctuations had been modified by physical stress or alcohol drinking. Perimetric evaluations of this case demonstrated daily variability in visual sensitivities which corresponded to the subjective complaints. This form of visual fluctuation appears unusual, and it is remarkable that this patient had such a homozygous mutation in the arrestin gene that gives rise to a premature truncation of translation. The human arrestin, also known as S-antigen, has an inhibitory role in the activated phototransduction cascade. It should be mentioned that the arrestin gene is one of those expressed in the pineal gland that is considered to play a major role in the circadian rhythm. Thus, it is tempting to speculate that the mutation in the arrestin gene could have modified rhythmic activities to induce daily alternating visual fluctuations in the present retinitis pigmentosa patient. The full coding sequences of the rhodopsin gene were normal in the relevant patient (data not shown). However, we could not deny the association of different polymorphisms in related gene products, or different environmental influences on the daily alternating visual fluctuations.

Recent molecular assessments revealed families with diffuse retinitis pigmentosa with or without features of Oguchi’s disease harbouring 1147 delA in the arrestin gene. The patient described here provides additional evidence that the same arrestin gene mutation is causally related not only to Oguchi’s disease but also to autosomal recessive retinitis pigmentosa. It is emphasized that our patient had classic features of autosomal recessive retinitis pigmentosa with poor visual prognosis and showed unusual visual fluctuations. In view of a rare mutation of arrestin gene, the relevant retinitis pigmentosa might be extremely rare in a large series of white patients with aetiology of undefined retinitis pigmentosa arrestin gene mutation was not detected.

YASUSHI ISASHIKI
Center for Chronic Viral Diseases, Kagoshima University Faculty of Medicine, Kagoshima-shi, Japan

NORIO OHBA
KATSUHISA KIMURA
SHIGZO SONODA
TOMOKO KAKIUCHI
Department of Ophthalmology, Kagoshima University Faculty of Medicine, Kagoshima-shi, Japan

TETSUYA OZAWA
Vohokama Teishin Hospital, Yokohama, Japan

Correspondence: Norio Ohba, MD, Department of Ophthalmology, Kagoshima University Faculty of Medicine, Kagoshima-shi 890-8520, Japan.

Accepted for publication 18 May 1999

Orbital Kimura’s disease in a white child

EDITOR.—Kimura’s disease is an uncommon, chronic inflammatory disorder of unknown aetiology which occurs predominantly in orientals and presents with tumour-like swellings mainly in the head and neck region. The condition primarily involves the subcutaneous tissues, parotid glands, and/or lymph nodes. Orbital cases are infrequent and most reported cases are in adults, with only one case in a child of Afro-Caribbean descent. Our case report presents orbital Kimura’s disease in an 8 year old white child.

CASE REPORT
An 8 year old white girl presented to us with a 4 week history of a painless swelling of her right upper lid. She initially had an upper respiratory tract infection lasting a month which was treated by her general practitioner with Augmentin. She subsequently developed what appeared to be a right sided ptosis. Of note, she had a strong history of allergic eye disease with intermittent conjunctivitis, and also suffers from asthma for which she takes Pulmicort and Bricanyl inhaler regularly. Examination revealed a right partial ptosis, mild right proptosis, and a palpable, painless mass in the superior aspect of her right orbit. There were no pupillary abnormalities, her extraocular movements were full, and fundoscopic examination was unremarkable. There was no associated regional lymphadenopathy and the rest of the ocular and general physical examination showed no other abnormalities.

Investigations done included a full blood count, which was within normal limits. WBC 8.57 x10^9/l with a differential of neutrophils 62%, lymphocytes 26%, monocytes 6%, eosinophils 5%, and basophils 0%. A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan with
Kimura’s disease is a chronic inflammatory disorder of unknown aetiology which presents with tumour-like swellings mainly in the head and neck region. Most cases have been described in China and Japan, with relatively fewer cases reported in non-orientals. The disease typically affects males in the 20–40 year age group, and presents as single or multiple smooth swellings in the subcutaneous tissues, major salivary gland and/or lymph nodes in the head and neck area.

Histopathologically, the features described in previous cases corresponded with ours; there are eosinophilic infiltrates (mainly in a perivascular pattern), vascular proliferation, fibrosis, and formation of lymphoid follicles. It is still uncertain as to whether it represents a benign lymphoid neoplastic process, a variant of haemangioma or an allergic reaction. There have been no reported cases of malignant change or fatalities. There is usually an insidious onset with a long benign course, but recurrences are common after surgical excision. Systemic associations include asthma and nephrotic syndrome. Regional lymphadenopathy ranges from 50–75% of cases and there is a high occurrence of peripheral blood eosinophilia.

Cases of Kimura’s disease have been reported in the orbits; however, there was only one previously reported orbital case in a child (of Afro-Caribbean descent). To our knowledge, this is the first orbital case reported in a white child. Non-orbital cases of Kimura’s disease have been successfully treated with surgical excision, irradiation and steroid therapy. After active therapy, they tend to recur. Cases have been conservatively managed for up to 12 years successfully although the cosmetic deformity can be quite a handicap. Periorbital cases have so far been treated successfully with surgical excision and biopsy with debulking.

Oral steroids and intralesional injection with steroids have not been as successful. There was only one previously reported case of severe haemorrhage on surgical resection. Complete surgical excision appears to be the best treatment.

Amikacin retinal toxicity

EDITOR,—It is well established that early intravitreal antibiotics are the treatment of choice for bacterial endophthalmitis but the choice of antibiotics remains controversial. Most centres rely on combination therapy and aminoglycosides are often used to treat Gram negative organisms. Aminoglycosides have a narrow therapeutic index and therefore a relatively small increase in concentration can cause significant toxicity. Following concerns about the risks of retinal toxicity caused by intravitreal gentamicin many ophthalmologists now use 0.4 mg intravitreal amikacin even though its use has also been associated with retinal toxicity. We report a case of retinal toxicity in a patient treated with intravitreal amikacin for postoperative bacterial endophthalmitis. This case serves to remind ophthalmologists of the risk of amikacin therapy and presents an argument for an alternative strategy in the treatment of bacterial endophthalmitis.

CASE REPORT

A 60 year old highly myopic woman presented with an acute history of increasing ocular pain and redness 5 days after routine phacoemulsification cataract extraction and intraocular lens implant. She had no other ocular or systemic history.

Initial examination revealed a visual acuity of 6/18, significant anterior chamber inflammation with a fibrin deposit over the pupil. A diagnosis of bacterial endophthalmitis was made and the patient was commenced on intravenous ciprofloxacin and hourly gentamicin, vancomycin, and dexamethasone eye drops. A vitreous biopsy was performed and 2 mg of intravitreal vancomycin (0.1 ml of 20 mg/ml) and 0.4 mg amikacin (0.1 ml of 4 mg/ml) were administered. The intravitreal antibiotics were prepared by a senior pharmacist using a typewritten protocol. The following day vision had deteriorated to no perception of light and the patient had developed a
vitreal aminoglycosides we recommend the use of ceftazidime instead of amikacin or gentamicin.

TIMOTHY L JACKSON
TOM H WILLIAMSON
St Thomas’s Hospital, London

Correspondence to: Tim Jackson, Vitreoretinal Unit, Department of Ophthalmology, St Thomas’s Hosp-
iu, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EH.

Accepted for publication 18 May 1999

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Simultaneous administration of hepatitis B and polio vaccines associated with bilateral optic neuritis

EDITOR,—Immunisation against hepatitis B is recommended when there is an increased risk of contracting the virus because of lifestyle, occupation, or factors such as close contact with a case. Immunisation against poliomyelitis is routine, but is infrequently given to infants in the UK with the reinfection during childhood and then again in the teenage years. For those individu-
als at continued risk of infection, further rein-
forcing doses are given every 10 years.

Both are commonly used vaccines and seri-
ous adverse reactions are extremely rare. We describe a case of severe bilateral, progressive optic neuritis occurring 1 week after vaccina-
tion against hepatitis B and poliomyelitis.

CASE REPORT
A 44 year old female health worker presented with gradual reduction of vision in both eyes associated with retrobulbar discomfort exac-
terbed by ocular movement, 7 days after vac-
cination against hepatitis B and poliomyelitis. Ophthalmological findings revealed visual acuities of 6/18 right eye, 6/12 left eye associ-
ated with bilateral optic nerve swelling. Within the next 48 hours the visual acuities dropped to perception of light in both eyes with absent direct and indirect pupillary light responses. This was despite commencement of therapy with intravenous methylprednisolone. Sys-
temic examination revealed no other abnor-
malities. All haematological and biochemical investigations were normal and no infective cause was isolated. Computed tomograph imaging was normal and there was no evidence of demyelination on magnetic reso-
nance imaging. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) examination revealed no abnormality other than biochemically, after culture, or on electro-
phoresis. In addition, CSF pressure was within normal limits. Visually evoked poten-
tials revealed absent responses. Despite 5 days of intravenous methylprednisolone (1 g per day) followed by a slow tapering off of intr-
travenous methylprednisolone (1 g/kg/day) her vision remained poor (counting fingers at 1 metre in both eyes) after 3 months.

COMMENT
The recombinant hepatitis B vaccine has been associated with a diverse range of isolated adverse reactions but ocular complications are exceedingly rare. Granel et al attributed four cases of central retinal vein occlusion in patients under 50 years of age to the vaccine, and associations with multiple evanescent white dot syndrome (MEWDS) and acute posterior multifocal placoid pigment epitheli-
opathy (APMPPE) have been described. Vaccination-related diabetic retinopathy and ne-
ortures of an autoimmune nature have been reported including CNS demyelination. Bil-
ateral optic neuritis occurs occasionally in acute hepatitis B infection.

Vaccines derived from live attenuated vi-
ruses such as the trivalent oral polio vaccine can cause direct viral infections of the central nervous system. The incidence of vaccine derived paralytic poliomyelitis is reported as being one in three million recipients of the vaccine or their close contacts. The vaccine has also been linked to some cases of Guillain–Barré syndrome but ocular complications have not been reported.

Others such as the trivalent measles, mumps, and rubella (MRR) vaccine and the monovalent rubella vaccine, have also been associated with bilateral optic neuritis.

The exact mechanism by which neurological complications following vaccination are un-
known but various hypotheses exist including immune complex mediated demyelination or neurotoxicity, antigenic mimicry between the vaccine and tissues, or a neurotoxic reaction to the diluent. Whatever the cause, the incidence of such complications following vaccination is unknown but very rare.

OWEN STEWART
BERNARD CHANG
JOHN BRADBURY
Department of Ophthalmology, Bradford Royal Infirmery, Bradford, West Yorkshire

Correspondence to: Mr Owen Stewart, Department of Ophthalmology, St James’s University Hospital, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 7TF.

Accepted for publication 18 May 1999

Figure 1 Fluorescein angiogram at 31 seconds showing delayed retinal perfusion with attenuated arterioles and incomplete venous filling.

Figure 2 Fluorescein angiogram at 52 seconds showing an extensive area of capillary non-perfusion with marked staining of the arteriolar walls and persisting non-perfusion of adjacent retinal venules.

relative afferent pupillary defect. Microscopy and culture failed to demonstrate any causa-
tive organism. The patient was started on 40 mg oral prednisolone but failed to manifest any improvement in acuity. Subsequently she was transferred to a specialist vitreoretinal unit where a diagnosis of retinal amikacin toxicity was made. Fluorescein angiogram taken 16 days after initial presentation con-

firmed the presence of retinal haemorrhage and a discrete area of capillary non-perfusion with significant late fluorescein leakage (Figs 1 and 2).

COMMENT
Intravitreal aminoglycosides are still recom-

mended for use in the treatment of bacterial endophthalmitis except the risk of retinal toxicity from intravitreal gentamicin and reports that amikacin in doses of 0.2–0.4 mg can also cause toxicity. The low incidence of bacterial endophthalmitis means that physi-
cians and pharmacists do not routinely prepare intravitreal antibiotics. Because of the low therapeutic index of aminoglycosides even relatively small dilution errors can cause retinal toxicity. For these reasons it is our practice to use a third generation cepha-

losporin (0.1 ml of ceftazidime 20 mg/ml) instead of an aminoglycoside. Primate studies have shown that intravitreal ceftazidime is non-toxic in doses of 2.25 mg and ceftazi-
dime has also been found to be effective against the Gram negative organisms respon-
sible for postoperative endophthalmitis.

Over the past 18 months we have used intravitreal ceftazidime (2 mg) and vancomycin (2 mg) in 21 patients with good therapeutic effect and with no adverse reactions. Owing to the risk of severe retinal toxicity with intra-

vitreal aminoglycosides we recommend the use of ceftazidime instead of amikacin or gentamicin.

Retinopathy after long term, standard doses of hydroxychloroquine

EDITOR,—While the antimalarial drug chloroquine has frequently been reported to cause retinopathy, there have been very few documented cases occurring with hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil, Winthrop Pharmaceuticals, New York, USA). Patients may tolerate large cumulative doses (up to 3923 g) of hydroxychloroquine without developing retinopathy.1 Doses of ≤400 mg/day and ≤6.5 mg/kg of body weight/day of hydroxychloroquine have been used safely and some authors have suggested that ophthalmic screening is not necessary for patients on these doses.2–5 We present a case of hydroxychloroquine toxicity that developed in a patient after long term use of 400 mg (6.3 mg/kg) of hydroxychloroquine daily.

CASE REPORT
A 61 year old white woman presented with a 1 year history of increased glare in both eyes without change in visual acuity. She had a history of rheumatoid arthritis for which she took hydroxychloroquine 400 mg daily (6.3 mg/kg/day) for 10 years. Her total hydroxychloroquine dose was 1460 g. The patient had never taken chloroquine and had no history of macular disease. Her weight had been stable over the 10 year period. Family history was negative for macular dystrophy or retinal degeneration. Visual acuity at presentation was 20/20 in both eyes. Colour vision testing with pseudoisochromatic plates was normal in both eyes. Fundus examination showed subtle retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) pigmentary changes in a crescent pattern around the inferior fovea of both eyes (Fig 1A). Fluorescein angiogram confirmed the fundus findings (Fig 1B) which were felt to be early bull’s eye maculopathy. No drusen or signs of macular degeneration were appreciated in either eye. A central visual field performed with Humphrey automated static threshold perimeter using a white test object revealed bilateral paracentral ring scotoma corresponding to the macular pigmentary changes (Fig 2, upper). A diagnosis of hydroxychloroquine retinopathy was established and the drug was discontinued.

Ten months later the patient’s vision remained 20/20 with normal colour vision in both eyes. Her symptom of glare in both eyes had resolved. The RPE changes in the retina were unchanged and visual field testing showed some improvement of the paracentral scotoma (Fig 2, lower).

COMMENT
Hydroxychloroquine retinopathy is a rare condition characterised by bull’s eye maculopathy or pigmentary changes in the macula, corresponding scotomas on visual field testing, and irreversible signs and symptoms once hydroxychloroquine is stopped.6,7 Cases of preretinopathy have been described in which visual field defects were elicited using a red test object but not a white test object on Humphrey perimetry.2–4 All cases of preretinopathy completely resolved after the discontinuation of hydroxychloroquine.5 Five cases of true hydroxychloroquine retinopathy reported in the literature demonstrated that discontinuation of hydroxychloroquine resulted in stabilisation but not resolution of the retinopathy.5 Unlike the other reported cases of true hydroxychloroquine retinopathy, our patient had some resolution of visual field loss. Much controversy exists as to whether the daily or cumulative dose of hydroxychloroquine contributes the greater risk for retinopathy. While there have been reported cases of hydroxychloroquine toxicity at cumulative doses similar to our patient’s (1460 g over a 10 year period), these patients had (1) received chloroquine therapy before hydroxychloroquine, (2) were treated with daily doses >400 mg/day, or (3) exceeded a daily dosage of 6.5 mg/kg of body weight/day.5 Our patient’s daily dose never exceeded 400 mg/day or 6.3 mg/kg of body weight/day. Her renal function was normal, thereby making the possibility of inadequate clearance of hydroxychloroquine unlikely. Hydroxychloroquine may cause retinopathy when used in recommended doses over a long period of time. Since a threshold dose for retinal toxicity has not been established, careful screening examinations should be performed especially as the cumulative dose increases. Prompt cessation of hydroxychloroquine may result in stabilisation of maculopathy at a clinically benign stage.

JENNIFER E THORNE
ALBERT M MAGUIRE
Department of Ophthalmology, Scheie Eye Institute, The Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia, USA

References

CASE REPORT
A 12 year old girl was referred to Moorfields Eye Hospital for a second opinion regarding her deteriorating vision following bilateral trabeculectomies with adjuvant mitomycin C for raised intraocular pressure.

At the age of 5 years, she was diagnosed as having megalocornea with ocular hypertrophy. Two years later, because of the persistent degree of IOP elevation (between 30–40 mm Hg), she was commenced on bilateral medical treatment. However, at the age of 11, she developed such severe problems with her topical treatment that surgery was considered necessary. In May 1996 right and subsequently left trabeculectomies were performed and during the procedures subconjunctival mitomycin C (0.3 mg/ml) was applied for 5 minutes. Her postoperative recovery was complicated by the development of ocular hypotony.

She was seen at Moorfields for the first time with progressive bilateral vision loss and recent onset of transient obscurations, 5 months after her filtration surgery and the onset of hypotony. Her visual acuities had fallen from right eye 20/20 (−0.5/−0.25 × 180°) to hand movements (HM) in the left eye 20/30 (−1.5 DS) (VF) on counting fingers (CF). Her visual fields on confrontation with a red target showed an enlarged blind spot. Both eyes had large, draining, diffuse and avascular filtration blebs with signs of hypotony as evidenced by bilateral IOPs of 0 mm Hg, superficial corneal epithelial staining striae, and macular and choroidal folds. Both optic discs were swollen although no haemorrhages or cotton wool spots were observed. The patient was sensitive to light and good quality photographs could not be obtained. An ultrasound showed bilateral anterotemporal choroidal detachments involving the ciliary body (right larger than left) and axial lengths recorded as 23.0 mm in both eyes.

She underwent several surgical procedures. The day after she first presented, she underwent a right subconjunctival autologous blood injection to the right bleb under general anaesthesia. The following day, however, her vision was worse with visual acuities being recorded as patchy areas of perception of light on the right and hand movements temporally on the left. Her IOPs were 4 and 0 mm Hg in the right and left respectively, and the thinner degree of disc swelling (as judged by further elevation of the disc) was noted bilaterally. It was considered by a neurologist (GTP) that the disc swelling may itself be contributing to the visual loss, particularly in view of recent transient visual obscurations which suggested critically impaired perfusion of the disc. To prevent even further vision loss, a lambar puncture to reduce the CSF pressure was suggested, to provide short term improvement in disc perfusion, which it was hoped in the longer term would be helped by raising her intraocular pressure. She underwent further surgery to both her eyes for hypotony, later that evening, which comprised revision of both blebs with scleral patch grafts. This was preceded by a lumbar puncture under general anaesthesia at which there was an opening pressure of 22.5 cmH₂O. A volume of 30 ml of CSF was removed and this was recorded as 5.3 cm H₂O with microbiological and biochemical analysis of CSF revealing no abnormality.

The day after surgery, the fourth day after initial presentation, examination revealed improved visual acuities of HM in both eyes with IOPs of 19 and 23 mm Hg in the right and left eye respectively. The disc swelling was felt to be reduced, and over the next few days improved gradually. Seven days after presentation, her IOPs had fallen to 0 and 8 mm Hg, right and left respectively, and she was taken back to theatre for anterior chamber refilling with Healon-GV. Her IOPs rose to around 20 mm Hg again 10 days later, with decreasing disc swelling, and a repeat ultrasound showed reduced choroidal detachments and axial lengths of 24.8 mm in the right and 24.6 mm in the left.

She underwent one other further surgical procedure, 7 weeks after presentation, when her IOPs became elevated again at 35 and 28 mm Hg right and left respectively, to a degree where it was felt her optic discs would be compromised. Treatment consisted of needling procedures to both blebs with subconjunctival injections of 5-fluorouracil to reduce scar formation. Her IOPs responded very quickly to this final procedure and she remains on no antiglaucoma medication with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation. Both drainage blebs are Seidel negative with normal intraocular pressures (less than 20 mm Hg) now 7 months after presentation.

COMMENT
This unusual presentation to us with severe ocular hypotony following bilateral primary glaucoma filtration surgery with mitomycin C. She developed vision loss, with episodes of transient obscurations attributable to hypotony and disc swelling. Her response to the initial surgery and subsequently to the corrective treatment was delayed.

Figure 1 Although neonatal examination had been normal, our patient had been noted to have "large staring eyes" at least from the photograph taken at age 2 years (top left). Reversal of ocular hypotony occurred following filtration bleb revision with scleral patch grafts, with drainage into blebs apparent at 2 months (top right) postoperatively. Hypotony induced papilloedema resolved after surgery with no disc swelling apparent in right (bottom left) or left (bottom right) funds, shown 7 months postoperatively.
The development of severe vision loss in our patient was associated with the occurrence of transient obscurations and hypotonous disc swelling. Resolution of the disc swelling was 4–6 weeks after correction of the hypotony, and improvement in visual acuity was noted thereafter. Its natural history—that is, the pattern of resolution and visual recovery, is compatible with disc swelling. Visual loss associated with hypotonic maculopathy, however, may never recover despite reversal of hypotony. Prolonged disc swelling in ocular hypotony is a recognised complication that is fortunately very rare. Experimental models have suggested that axoplasmic transport is delayed in cases of hypotony-induced optic disc swelling giving rise to the same features histologically as seen with raised intracranial pressure papilloedema—for example, axonal swelling, accumulation of mitochondria, and cytoid body (cotton wool spots) formation.

The pathogenesis of disc swelling in ocular hypotony may be related to that occurring in raised intracranial pressure if it is postulated that in both situations the CSF pressure in the subarachnoid space around the optic nerve exceeds the perfusion pressure of the optic disc. Therefore in our patient, it was considered that lowering the CSF pressure to well below normal levels (<20 mm H2O) might provide temporary improvement in optic disc perfusion—hence our target for a very low closing pressure of 5.5 mm H2O in the lumbar puncture. Two previous reports of unilateral disc swelling following trabeculectomy also suggest that optic disc oedema could result from a disturbed equilibrium between ICP and IOP—though none of the patients described in these papers had hypotony or prolonged vision loss.

The development of profound vision loss in association with hypotony induced optic disc swelling in our patient, was as a complication of mitomycin C assisted glaucoma filtration surgery. However, the degree of hypotony was most probably related to reduced scleral rigidity. We believe that her abnormal wound healing response and defective connective tissue contributed to the severity of the hypotony that followed initial surgery with mitomycin C. We suggest that antiproliferatives be used with extreme caution in patients who you suspect may have a connective tissue disorder. A quick screening procedure might include a joint hypermobility score as shown in Table 1. Patients with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, such as our patient, may be at high risk of post filtration hypotony and developing “soft eyes” with sight threatening sequelae, as our case suggests that not only might they have elastic skin but also “elastic globes”.

Table 1: Screen for joint hypermobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Score (maximum = 9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive hyperflexion of 5th metacarpophalangeal joint beyond 90°</td>
<td>1 point each hand (max = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive hyperextension of thumb to flexor aspect of wrist</td>
<td>1 point each hand (max = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperextension of elbow beyond 10°</td>
<td>1 point each arm (max = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperextension of knee beyond 10°</td>
<td>1 point each leg (max = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward flexion of trunk, palms flat on floor in front, knees in extension</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 Our patient demonstrates joint hypermobility, a feature of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. She can oppose both thumbs to the flexor aspect of her wrist (top left), fold her fingers one over the other (top right), bend over to place her palms flat on the floor keeping her knees extended (bottom left), and put her ankles around her head (bottom right).
Fluctuating oculomotor hyperfunction and hypofunction caused by aneurysmal compression of the third cranial nerve

EDITOR,—Aneurysms of the posterior communicating artery classically present with a painful progressive palsy of the third cranial nerve producing ptosis, ophthalmoplegia, and mydriasis. We present a case in which aneurysmal compression of the third nerve produced a variable ptosis and ophthalmoplegia without pupillary involvement in association with intermittent hyperfunction of the ipsilateral third nerve innervated muscles.

CASE REPORT
A 73 year old woman with a history of hypertension and ischaemic heart disease was referred to the eye department with a 3 week history of intermittent diplopia which she described as inconsistently horizontal, vertical, or oblique, and a 2 week history of right orbital pain and difficulty in opening her right eye. The diplopia and ptosis were often worse in the mornings.

On examination the corrected visual acuities were right 6/6 and left 6/9. There was a very variable and apparently fatigable right ptosis which was occasionally replaced by right upper lid retraction (Fig 1). The results of ocular motility testing were inconsistent, ranging from 4 prism dioptres of esotropia to 25 prism dioptres of exotropia in the primary position with between 3 and 7 prism dioptres of vertical deviation. There was variable limitation of elevation and depression of the right eye and occasional right upper lid retraction on adduction of the eye. Conversely, the deviation reversed to become a right hypertropia due to right superior rectus overaction (Fig 1).

Magnetic resonance imaging and angiography were performed showing a 6 mm diameter saccular aneurysm arising from the intracranial internal carotid artery at the level of the posterior communicating artery. Attempted embolisation of the aneurysm failed owing to a focal stenosis at the origin of the right internal carotid artery and the patient underwent uneventful clipping of the aneurysm instead. There was a rapid improvement in the ophthalmoplegia following clipping and 6 weeks postoperatively all the neurological signs had resolved.

COMMENT
The early recognition of oculomotor nerve compression by a posterior communicating artery aneurysm is essential given that the mean interval between the onset of diplopia and bleeding is 4 weeks in patients who develop a subarachnoid haemorrhage.1 Although the retro-orbital pain was typical, this case is unusual for two reasons. Firstly the ptosis and ophthalmoplegia were notably variable (Fig 1). Secondly, episodes of right upper lid retraction, esotropia, and hypertropia were observed (Fig 1). Although modest variability of symptoms (for example, intermittent diplopia)2 has previously been described, we can find no reports in the literature of such marked fluctuations in ptosis due to third nerve compression. Furthermore, in this case upper lid retraction and, on eye movement testing, esotropia and hypertropia—that is, excessive activity in third nerve innervated muscles, was observed.

A similar phenomenon of co-existing inappropriate neural discharge and block is seen in hemifacial spasm3 where compression of the seventh nerve by abnormal vessels produces hemifacial spasm and mild facial weakness. Although there is some controversy as to whether it is the mechanical irritation of the facial nerve or secondary hyperexcitability of the facial nerve nucleus that is responsible for hemifacial spasm,4 it is now accepted by most authors that compression of the facial nerve is the causative factor.5 A precise intraoperative correlation between decompression of the facial nerve and electromyographic disappearance of abnormal facial muscle activity has been demonstrated6 although the facial weakness has been reported to take longer to resolve.7 An analogous situation of aneurysmal compression causing alternating ophthalmoplegia and third nerve hyperactivity in the case reported here is suggested by the similar course of resolution to that seen following decompression of the facial nerve for hemifacial spasm—the third nerve hyperactivity resolved immediately following clipping of the aneurysm while the ophthalmoplegia improved rapidly but took several weeks to resolve fully. The degree of third nerve hyperactivity was, however, much greater than the mild facial weakness seen in hemifacial spasm and may have been due to the greater degree of compression of the third nerve in this case.

This case is important for two reasons. Firstly, this is the first report of compression of the third cranial nerve producing alternating oculomotor hypo- and hyperfunction as a result of a compressive lesion. Secondly, it emphasises the importance of excluding compression by intracranial aneurysm in a patient with variable signs which could be explained by a partial third nerve palsy.

MARGARET R DAYAN
Department of Neuro-ophtalmology
Oxford Eye Hospital, Radcliffe Infirmary, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HE

Correspondence to: Miss Dayan
Accepted for publication 31 May 1999

Figure 1 (Top) Right ptosis with frontalis overaction and right hypertropia. (Middle) Right ptosis has resolved. (Bottom) A few minutes later there is right upper lid retraction and right hypertropia indicating right third nerve hyperfunction.
In previous studies HIV was known to interfere with mitochondrial function. In July 1997 with acute onset of vision loss in his left eye within the previous 2 weeks. The patient had been diagnosed with HIV infection in 1991. No opportunistic infections defining AIDS had been present so far. Antiretroviral therapy consisted of zidovudine since June 1991 as well as additional indinavir and nevirapine since January 1997. Best corrected visual acuity was right eye 20/20 and left eye 6/20. Further ophthalmological examination revealed a left afferent papillary defect and an absolute central scotoma in the left eye. Indocyanine green angiography and fluorescein angiography disclosed a slight oedema of the optic disc without leakage. Visual evoked potentials (VEP) of the left eye showed reduced central amplitudes and prolonged latencies. Ophthalmic examination of the right eye at the time of presentation was normal.

LHON. Therefore the patient was specifically asked for past or present additional medical or environmental factors postulated to trigger LHON. The patient denied any alcohol or tobacco consumption. Exposure to chemicals, solvents, toxins, or dangerous factory processes was not reported. Significantly larger amounts of foods with high cyanide content were not described.


LHON is a bilateral acute or subacute optic neuropathy caused by mutations in the mtDNA. Point mutations of the mtDNA at position 11778, homoplasmic to the level of detection, confirming the diagnosis of Leber’s hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON). Therefore the patient was specifically asked for past or present additional medical or environmental factors postulated to trigger LHON. The patient denied any alcohol or tobacco consumption. Exposure to chemicals, solvents, toxins, or dangerous factory processes was not reported. Significantly larger amounts of foods with high cyanide content were not described. Additional metabolic or neurological diseases were not present.

COMMENT LHON is a bilateral acute or subacute optic neuropathy caused by mutations in the mtDNA. Point mutations of the mtDNA at nucleotide position 11778, 3460, and 14484 involving NADH dehydrogenase (ND) subunits 1, 4, and 6, respectively, of respiratory chain complex I, are responsible for the majority of cases worldwide. These primary mitochondrial mutations are necessary but not sufficient for LHON disease expression. Only 30% of males and 10% of females carrying the 11778 mutation actually suffer visual loss. Therefore other genetic or epigenetic factors must play a role in disease penetrance although they are poorly defined at the present time. Proposed determinants of disease penetrance include heteroplasmy, secondary mitochondrial mutations, nutritional factors, metabolic disease, and toxic exposure.

Apart from the primary mutation our patient was only exposed to two epigenetic factors known to interfere with mitochondrial function. In previous studies HIV itself as well as zidovudine were demonstrated to affect mitochondrial integrity. Mitochondrial changes depend more on the duration of zidovudine application than on the applied dose. The onset of visual loss in LHON typically occurs between the ages of 15 and 35 years in most pedigrees. We hypothesise that the exception—long period of zidovudine treatment since diagnosis of HIV infection in 1991 and/or the infection itself may account for the unusual late expression of LHON in our patient. This is the first report on a patient with LHON suffering from additional HIV infection.

Christoph Lüke
Klinik und Poliklinik für Augenheilkunde

Oliver A Cornely
Klinik für Innere Medizin, Universität Köln, Germany

Julia Fricke
Elfi Lehner
Karl Ulrich Bartz-Schmidt
Klinik und Poliklinik für Augenheilkunde, Universität Köln, Germany

Bernd Wissinger
Molekulargenetisches Labor, Universitätsgesamtklinik Tübingen, Germany

Richard Brunner
Klinik und Poliklinik für Augenheilkunde, Universität Köln, Germany

Correspondence to: Christoph Lüke, Klinik und Poliklinik für Augenheilkunde, Joseph-Stelzmann Strasse 9, D-50924 Köln, Germany

Accepted for publication 17 June 1999


Acute onset comitant esotropia as presenting sign of demyelinating disease

Editor,—Comitant esotropia is most commonly benign when occurring in infancy or early childhood. Examination to rule out a paroxysmal deviation is essential. However, acute onset of comitant esotropia has also been reported in association with serious neurological disease. It has been reported in association with hydrocephalus. 1 These patients generally have obvious neurological problems associated with hydrocephalus, and are not a diagnostic dilemma. 2 They may have a meningomyelocele or encephalocele, and an A-pattern esotropia. 3, 4 In cases of comitant esotropia associated with shunt failure, all the esotropias resolve when the shunts are revised. These patients do not have A-pattern esotropia.

Comment Acute onset comitant esotropia is most commonly benign when occurring in infancy or early childhood. Examination to rule out a paroxysmal deviation is essential. However, acute onset of comitant esotropia has also been reported in association with serious neurological disease. It has been reported in association with hydrocephalus. 1 These patients generally have obvious neurological problems associated with hydrocephalus, and are not a diagnostic dilemma. 2 They may have a meningomyelocele or encephalocele, and an A-pattern esotropia. 3, 4 In cases of comitant esotropia associated with shunt failure, all the esotropias resolve when the shunts are revised. These patients do not have A-pattern esotropia.
esotropias. Patients may not necessarily present with papilloedema even when hydrocephalus is present. In the present case, no hydrocephalus was noted on neuroradiographic study.

Arnold-Chiari malformation has also been reported in association with acute comitant esotropia. These cases may present with an A-pattern, co-existing nystagmus and hydrocephalus. Arnold-Chiari malformations sometimes do not manifest until late childhood or adulthood, and can be mild. Neuroradiographic study did not reveal Arnold-Chiari malformation in this patient.

Central nervous system tumours have also been reported in association with acute onset comitant esotropias. Tumours in this group include cerebellar astrocytomas, and medulloblastomas, as well as pontine gliomas. An A-pattern esotropia is unusual in these patients. In a report by Williams and Hoyt, three of their six patients had some form of nystagmus associated with the comitant esotropia. They suggested neurological evaluation in any patient with both nystagmus and acute comitant esotropia. Acute disseminated encephalomyelitis is generally post viral and is characterised by abrupt headache, fever, drowsiness, and focal neurological dysfunction. Cerebrospinal fluid analysis may exhibit pleocytosis. It may resolve completely or may result in permanent impairment and seizures. Whether this lesion represents a localised variant of acute disseminated encephalomyelitis or multiple sclerosis is not clear. However, cases of acute onset comitant esotropia with suspicious presentations warrant neuroimaging to rule out intracranial pathology including central nervous system demyelinating lesions.

BARRY N WASSERMAN
Chester County Eye Care Associates, 606 East Marshall Street, Suite 104, West Chester, PA 19380, USA
Accepted for publication 8 June 1999