LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Xeroderma pigmentosum in three consecutive siblings of a Nigerian family: observations on oculocutaneous manifestations in black African children

EDITOR—Xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), a rare autosomal recessive disorder characterised by defective DNA repair leading to clinical and cellular hypersensitivity to ultraviolet radiation, manifesting mainly as intolerance of skin and eyes to light, has been described in all races, but is exceedingly rare in the negroid race, although some cases have been reported in both the American and African black people.1 We describe three consecutive siblings of a Nigerian, Fulani, family with the typical features of XP. We wish to draw attention to the clinical, phenotypic variations of this syndrome in black children of the same family living together in an area of high sunshine, and the difficulties in the management of XP patients with advanced disease and limited access to facilities in an environment where avoidance of skin exposure to intense ultraviolet rays is problematic. We believe the patients we have described constitute the first series on XP in black children in the west African subregion.

CASE REPORTS

Case 1
The proband, a 9 year old girl, was first seen at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital (UDUTH), Sokoto (13.02° N, 5.14° E), Nigeria, in February 1999 with a history of the development of generalised actinic keratoses, and associated with sunshine hypersensitivity and histologically proved squamous cell carcinoma of both the skin and conjunctiva, the diagnosis in the proband was xeroderma pigmentosum in its final phase, the cancerous period.

Case 2
This 7 year old boy, the brother of the proband, presented with milder symptoms of XP, with slower progression. Thus, the initial generalised erythematous rash associated with exposure to sunshine became obvious from the age of 3 months; worsening of vision developed from the age of 4 years. The cutaneous lesions, though similar to those in the proband, were less severe. The entire skin was also dry, covered with hyperpigmented and hypopigmented atrophic roundish lesions. The actinic keratotic lesions were less numerous. There were no ulcerations and no cutaneous tumours. The ocular lesions were also milder than in the proband. In the right eye the conjunctiva was xerotic, but without areas of hypertrophy. The cornea was dull, but clear with tendency to dryness. The left eye showed total loss of lashes of the lower lid and hypertrophy of the nasal half of the conjunctiva, with raising of its edge towards the limbus. The VA (6/60 in both eyes) was better than in the proband. The ocular and cutaneous lesions were compatible with xeroderma pigmentosum in the precancerous phase.

Case 3
This was the 5 year old sister of the proband. The onset of the disease and its severity took a middle course between that of the index case (case 1) and the second patient. The onset of erythematous skin lesions and freckles following exposure to sunshine was at age 6 weeks. Hypopigmented and hyperpigmented macules become evident by the age of 3½ years. The actinic keratoses became numerous by age 3½ years and ulcerative excoriations on the upper lip was noticed at age 4½ years. The worsening of vision became obvious from the age of 3 years. Ocular examination revealed marked blepharoconjunctivitis in the right eye, the conjunctiva was generally fleshy, vascular, with a tendency to bleed and covered the cornea in both its nasal half and inferotemporal quadrant. Other corneal areas were covered by a fibrovascular epithelial membrane (Fig 2). Biopsy of the conjunctival mass revealed moderately differentiated squamous cell carcinoma. In the left eye there was total loss of lashes of the lower lid, and a vascular fleshy overgrowth of the

Figure 1 Left eye of the proband demonstrating the large pink, friable conjunctival lesion, a biopsy of which showed moderately differentiated squamous cell carcinoma. Note the scalloped nature of the surrounding facial skin with actinic keratoses, hypopigmented and hyperpigmented areas and crusted ulceration of the nasal bridge, all typical cutaneous lesions in xeroderma pigmentosum.

Figure 2 Case 3, right eye showing vascular, fleshy conjunctival tissues, a biopsy of which revealed features consistent with moderately differentiated squamous cell carcinoma. The facial skin demonstrates actinic keratoses typical of xeroderma pigmentosum.
COMMENT

XP is generally regarded as a very serious disease in the tropics because of its pronounced sensitivity to sunlight. There was some degree of variation in the severity and rate of progression of the disease in our patients despite their first degree relationship and the common environment characterised by high sunshine. The assertion that the severity of the skin and eye lesions relates more to the degree of skin exposure may not explain, entirely, this variation since all the affected children live in a common environment of high sunshine. A recent Japanese study has shown that there is correlation of the clinical manifestations and gene mutations even among patients of the same complementation group. We had no facilities in Nigeria to determine the complementation group of our patients and the individual gene mutations of these children. There are many obstacles in Nigeria to the proper management of XP patients in general and the three siblings we have described in particular. Firstly, an elaborate system of photoprotection from birth could not be carried out since there were no facilities for prenatal diagnosis of XP. Secondly, sun exposure could not be altogether avoided and only some measure of protection against the sun was provided—special glasses, clothes, and sunscreen creams. Unfortunately, the management of our patients was limited to these only. Surgical intervention could not be carried out mainly because the cost was too exorbitant for the poor parents. For these patients with advanced disease, limited access to facilities, in an environment of high sunshine, the prognosis is indeed gloomy.

HAMIDU AHMED
Department of Paediatrics, Umanus Danfidiyo University, Teaching Hospital, PMB 2370, Sokoto, Nigeria

RAHMATU Y HASSAN
UDUTH, Sokoto, Nigeria

UMAR H PINDIGA
University of Maidaguri Teaching Hospital, Maidaguri, Nigeria

Correspondence to: Dr Ahmed
Accepted for publication 22 May 2000


Multifocal electroretinographic and angiographic changes in pre-eclampsia

EDITOR.—Pre-eclampsia is characterised by hypertension, proteinuria and generalised oedema developed after 20 weeks’ gestation. We report serial changes in multifocal electroretinography (MERG), fluorescein angiography (FA), and indocyanine green angiography (ICGA) in a patient with pre-eclampsia who developed choroidal ischaemia and serous retinal detachment.

CASE REPORT

A 28 year old Chinese woman, gravida II, para I, was hospitalised at 31 weeks’ gestation with hypertension, proteinuria and generalised oedema developed after 20 weeks’ gestation. Two days post partum, she complained of blurring of vision in the right eye. On examination, her visual acuity was right eye: 20/30, left eye: 20/15. There was no afferent pupillary defect. Anterior segment and intraocular pressure was normal. Fundal examination revealed bilateral greyish-yellow lesions at the level of retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), distributed mainly in peripapillary macula. FA and ICGA of both eyes showed early patchy hypofluorescence with delayed filling of choroid around the discs and nasal maculae, suggestive of choroidal ischaemia. Late phase showed leakage with stippled staining (Fig 1).

MERG was performed 2 weeks post partum. Stimulation used was the 103 hexagons m-sequence with VERIS system (Electro Diagnostic Imaging, Inc, San Mateo, CA, USA). Three dimensional topographic and trace array of the MERG showed decreased response amplitudes in both nasal maculae and the right fovea. There was also delayed N1 and P1 implicit times and diminished response density of the nasal macula compared with the temporal macula in both eyes (Fig 2). Five weeks post partum, her visual acuity improved to 20/15 in both eyes. RPE changes corresponding to areas of delayed filling and leakage were found. FA and ICGA performed 3 months post partum were unremarkable. However, MERG showed persistent bilateral mild decrease in amplitude of the nasal macula compared with the temporal macula, despite full recovery of the right foveal peak. Visual field assessment was not performed.

COMMENT

In our patient, the area of decreased response amplitude and delayed latencies in MERG corresponded with the area of choroidal ischaemia detected by FA and ICGA. Additionally, it detected abnormal area in the right fovea that did not show up with FA or ICGA. When repeat FA and ICGA were unremarkable 3 months later, MERG still showed persistent abnormality in both nasal maculae. The partial recovery of MERG in our case supports the current concept of transient vasospasm in choroidal circulation in pre-eclampsia. However, the damage may not be completely reversible as previously reported.

Figure 1 Right eye at 2 weeks post partum. (Top) Fluorescein angiogram shows delayed filling of choriocapillaries in the early phase and leakage with staining in the late phase. (Bottom) Similar changes in indocyanine green angiogram.
Figure 2 Multifocal electroretinogram (MERG) of right eye. (Left) At 2 weeks post partum, trace array and three dimensional MERG topography showed increased retinal response density in the fovea and nasal part of the macula. Average MERG responses of the temporal and nasal maculae showing prolonged N1 and P1 latencies as well as diminished response amplitude of the nasal macula compared with the temporal macula. Mean N1 and P1 latencies were 16.7 ms and 30.0 ms for the nasal macula, and 14.2 and 27.5 ms for the temporal macula, respectively. Mean P1 response amplitude for the nasal right macula is 70% of the temporal response (18.0 nV/deg vs 26.3 nV/deg). (Right) At 3 months post partum, trace array and three dimensional MERG topography show recovery of the foveal response. However, average MERG response shows persistent mild decrease in response amplitude in the nasal macula, which is 83% of the temporal macula (19.2 nV/deg vs 23.4 nV/deg).

The signals of MERG are thought to be derived from the outer retinal layers of cones and also the inner retinal layer including the bipolar and Muller cells. The retinal response may be impared secondary to RPE dysfunction and choroidal ischemia. Similar MERG findings in central serous choridoretinopathy were reported, in which the RPE abnormality is thought to be secondary to the underlying choroidal vascular disease. MERG has the advantage of being non-invasive and risk of breastfeeding after angiography can be avoided. It is more sensitive than FA and ICG in the evaluation of macular choroidal ischemia in pre-eclampsia.

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ALVIN K H KWOK Jodie Z L LI TIMOTHY Y Y LAI WAI-MAN CHAN PRAMOD BHENDE DENNIS S C LAM
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Prince of Wales Hospital, Hong Kong

Correspondence to: Dr Alvin K H Kwok, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Eye Hospital, 147K, Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong
kwokkh@ha.org.hk
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Signet ring cell carcinoma of the eccrine sweat gland in the eyelid, treated by radiotherapy alone

EDITOR,—The signet ring cell carcinoma of the eccrine sweat gland is a very rare tumour of the eyelid. Only six cases have been published up to now. There is a preponderance of males; only one woman was affected. The patients’ ages ranged from 47 to 78 years. This tumour shares some histological features with breast carcinoma, the metastasis of which represents the most important differential diagnosis—Indian file formations, signet ring cells, and expression of oestrogen, as well as progesterone, receptors. One significant difference is that the positive staining for those hormone receptors is found mainly in the cytoplasm in signet ring cell carcinoma, in contrast with the nuclear staining of breast carcinomas.

Two biopsies revealed an infiltrating tumour with Indian file formations; some of the tumour cells had a signet ring appearance with nuclei located peripherally as a result of intracytoplasmic vacuoles. The latter possessed microvilli, as could be demonstrated by electron microscopy. The cytoplasm stained positive with periodic acid Schiff (Fig 2) and with antibodies against oestrogen and progesterone receptors as well as human milk fat globulin. No hormone receptor expression was found in the nuclei. The growth fraction was 5%, determined with MIB1.

Systemic examination did not reveal any other tumour, especially no breast carcinoma and no adenocarcinoma of the gastrointestinal tract. Two treatment modalities were discussed—orbital exenteration and radiotherapy. Since the patient refused orbital exenteration radiotherapy was started in September and October 1998, and performed over 6 weeks, with a total dosage of 56 Gy. Two months later the cornea showed erosions which were treated with lubricants; the ocular motility was heavily impaired. Fourteen months after radiotherapy the lid skin was soft again without any evidence of tumour recurrence, the cornea only showed irregular epithelium, and the eye motility had returned to almost normal. Unfortunately, because of optic nerve damage by glaucoma and radiotherapy, the right eye went blind.

COMMENT
In most cases of signet ring cell carcinoma described in the literature, upper and lower lids of one eye were involved. Three patients were initially treated by excision alone; all of them had a period of survival of at least 6 years. One of these patients

Figure 2 Signet ring cells with PAS positive intracytoplasmic vacuoles, arranged in an Indian file pattern (periodic acid Schiff, original magnification ×200).
developed a recurrence after 10 years, with preauricular lymph node metastasis, as a result of which he was admitted to hospital for the intra-venous administration of antibiotics and probing of the nasolacrimal apparatus. Should the dacryocystocele recur or epithora ensue, and repeated probing does not give the result, it may be necessary to intubate the nasolacrimal apparatus or perform a dacrocytosrohinos- tomy. In 1893, Caldwell described the first case of an endonasal operative approach to the lacrimal system. This technique was later modified by West and supported by Mosher in 1921. In spite of these attempts, the external dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) — the technique inaugurated by Toti in 1904 — was, for a long time, the most accepted procedure for lacrimal sac surgery. The reason for this was presumably limited transnasal visualisation caused by bleeding during endonasal dacryocystorhinos- tomy.  

14 Heerman and Neues used a microscope for a transnasal approach to the lacrimal sac, whereas McDonough and Meiring were the first to advocate endonasal endoscopic dacryocystorhinostomy (EEDCR), in 1989.  

15 Using new instrumentation and techniques for sinus surgery in general, many authors have proved that EEDCR can be performed with lower morbidity in adults and with success rates equal to those achieved with the traditional external approach.  

CASE REPORT  
A 4 month old girl presented with huge recurrent abscesses in the left medial canthal region (Fig 1) and a huge epithora. Initially she was managed by conservative methods (warm compresses and massage over the swollen lacrimal sac), but the clinical appearance did not show any change. She underwent several incisions whenever the abscess severely exacer- bated, threatening to perforate spontaneously. Attempts to probe the nasocalicral canal were performed in the “silent” phases of the disease, but the probe did not pass deeper than the bottom of the lacrimal sac, suggesting the absence of the canal. Attempts to irrigate the lacrimal canals were not successful either. A lacrimal sac massage resulted in a certain amount of mucus bursting out from the inferior lacrimal punctum, indicating a blockage of the lacrimal system underneath the lacrimal sac.

Endonasal endoscopic dacryocystorhinostomy showed no signs of intranasal extension. Because of the clear clinical diagnosis of dacryocystocele, the patient’s age, and the need for additional general anaesthesia, we did not insist on a dacryocystogram or computed tomographic scanning. At the time we decided to try to perform an endonasal endoscopic dacryocystorhinostomy (EEDCR), the girl was in one of her “silent phases”, without any clinical sign of acute exacerbation of the infection. Only moderate hemispheric bulging was seen in the medial canthal region.

We started the procedure by inserting two small, very thin (20×5 mm) gauze flakes, previously soaked in a 5% cocaine solution mixed with adrenaline (5:1 ratio) and then firmly squeezed, into the left nasal cavity. The flakes were removed after 5 minutes. A favourable vasoconstriction of the whole nasal mucosa was achieved. Then 0.5 ml of local anaesthetic (1% lignocaine with 1:100 000 adrenaline) was injected submucosally in the area just anterosuperior to the insertion of the middle turbinate. We used a paediatric endoscope of 2.7 mm in diameter and 30 degrees optics. The mucosa of this region was then removed by means of bipolar coagulation, and lacrimal bone was nicely exposed in an oval shape measuring up to 6 mm in longer diameter. The bone was drilled off and thinned out, so that the lacrimal sac became visible (the removal of the underlying lacrimal bone is more easily performed posteriorly, where it is thinner, but it is equally important anteriorly to avoid the possibility of orbital disrup- tion). The ophthalmological probe was in- serted into the lacrimal canal and the sac itself, tenting it towards the nasal cavity. Then lacrimal sac marsupialisation was performed using otological microsurgical scissors and punches, and a large amount of turbid tears mixed with mucopurulent discharge was obtained.

A 6 cm long nasal thin gauze ribbon package with antibiotic ointment was placed in the operated region for 3 days. After 5 days, there was no sign of dacryocystocele or dacryocystitis in the girl’s face (Fig 2). Eight months after the surgery, she is feeling fine.

COMMENT  
Since, after 16 weeks of life, the nasolacrimal duct obstruction and dacryocystocele did not resolve spontaneously or after conserva- tive treatment, we performed an endonasal endoscopic dacryocystorhinostomy. As far as we know, this was the youngest child ever operated by means of EEDCR. The small anatomical dimensions of the infant nose posed a technical challenge in performing EEDCR: during the use of Richard’s otologi- cal drill for bone removal, there was some dif- ficulty in concomitant endoscopic visualisation and potential damage to the nasal mucosa from rotation of the drill shaft. We also performed a lacrimal opening of 6 mm with angled endoscopic biting forceps (the usual opening is about 8 mm).

In comparison with an external dacryo- cysterhinostomy, EEDCR avoids an external scar and offers very low morbidity in the immediate postoperative course. In spite of the technical problems, we think that...
EBDR, even in such a small infant, can be a good therapeutic choice in cases refractory to conservative treatment (warm compresses, massage, probing) because of its non-invasive performance and a very fast postoperative rehabilitation.

RANKO MLADINA
ORL Department, University Hospital Salata, Zagreb, Croatia

KRSTO DAWIDOWSKY
ORL Department, University Hospital Salata, Zagreb, Croatia

MARTIN JURILINA
BOZENA TRUPKOVIC-FOTIVEC
ORL Department, University Hospital Salata, Zagreb, Croatia

Correspondence to: Professor Dr R Mladina, ORL Department, University Hospital Salata, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

prof.mladina@doctor.com

Accepted for publication 23 June 2000

CASE REPORT

In 1997 a 32 year old homosexual man presented for the first time to the University Eye Hospital, Tübingen. For 4 weeks he had suffered from an acute retinal necrosis of the left eye. His right eye was not involved. The visual acuity of the left eye was 0.1. The anterior segment of the eye showed corneal precipitates but no cells in the anterior chamber. Owing to massive cell infiltration in the vitreous the lower part of the fundus was not visible. There was a large necrotic area with bleeding and obscuring vitasculitis in the upper nasal periphery (Fig 1). The patient claimed to be healthy, apart from an EBV infection with pericarditis which had occurred when he was 17 years old. Tests for HIV and syphilis were repeatedly negative, also for Lyme disease, toxoplasmosis, hepatitis B, HSV, and VZV. There were increased titres for EBV-IgA disease, toxoplasmosis, hepatitis B, HSV, and VZV. There were increased titres for EBV-IgA.

After therapy with aciclovir 5 × 400 mg, prednisolone 60 mg, acetylsalicylic acid (200 mg), and topical prednisolone acetate the symptoms decreased.

After 8 weeks his visual acuity increased up to 0.5 but dropped to 0.2 after 5 months as a result of vitreous haemorrhages because of neovascularisations. After clearance of the bleeding and peripheral laser coagulation the neovascularisations resolved. The fundus showed scars but no holes in the area of the necrotic retina (Fig 2). After 25 months the visual acuity was 0.2. The anterior parts showed mild cataracta complicata. Vitreous cell infiltration still persisted and the central part of the fundus was not clearly seen. The patient showed an absolute central scotoma and atrophy of the optic nerve, without treatment.

COMMENT

The role of EBV in ocular diseases is still not clear, because approximately 95% of adults are positive for EBV antigen and only a few suffer from ocular disease. Previously described cases of “EBV retinitis” only described inflammation of the posterior pole without scar forming, which is not typical for viral retinitis. Proving an acute EBV infection usually is done with increased EBV titres. Such a constellation was found in our patient. The titre decreased during the following 12 weeks suggesting that EBV may play a part in this man’s retinitis. The reported patient showed all criteria of the American Uveitis Society for ARN.

However, it is not possible to rule out that other herpesviruses have caused the retinitis. This probably could only have been proved with a diagnostic vitrectomy or anterior chamber tap which was refused because of improvement with treatment. Serological findings showed no signs of other herpes infections.

SUSANNE KRAMER
Katharinenhospital Stuttgart, Kriegerstrasse 60, D-70174 Stuttgart, Germany

CHRISTOF BRUMMER
MANFRED ZIERHUT
University Eye Hospital, Department I, Schleichtrasse 12, D-72076 Tübingen, Germany

Correspondence to: Dr Manfred Zierhut, University Eye Hospital, Schleichtrasse 12, D-72076 Tübingen, Germany

manfred.zierhut@med.uni-tuebingen.de

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Intrascleral recurrence of uveal melanoma after transretinal “endoresection”

EDITOR.—Conservation of the eye and vision in patients with juxtapapillary choroidal melanoma is still a challenge. Both plaque radiotherapy and proton beam radiotherapy tend to cause optic neuropathy, which is associated with disc and iris neovascularisation, vitreous haemorrhage, and neovascular glaucoma. These complications can also occur after photocoagulation, which is less effective than radiotherapy at destroying the deeper parts of the tumour. Transcleral local resection of posterior tumours is especially di
efective than

Y postoperative radiation. In a previous report, eight out of 52 cases received secondary photocoagulation for possible tumour recurrence at the margins of the surgical coloboma and one enucleated eye was found to have microscopic tumour depos-

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Transretinal “endoresection” was performed in July 1994. The procedure involved three port vitrectomy, retinectomy over the tumour, endodthermy to bleeding points, endolaser photocoagulation applied to the margins and the bed of surgical coloboma and fluid-gas-silicone exchange. Histological examination showed the melanoma to be of mixed, spindle, and epithelioid cell type. In September 1994, the eye was settling well, except for an amelanotic choroidal swelling, which was noted adjacent to the inferonasal margin of the coloboma. This was believed to consist of a bubble of silicone oil in the suprachoroidal space although the possibility of recurrent melanoma could not be excluded clinically. There was also a localised trachional retinal detachment caused by vitreous bands.

Vitreoretinal surgery was performed, with release of the vitreous traction and excision of the retina and choroid over the swelling. This procedure confirmed that the tumour consisted of a bubble of silicone oil beneath the choroid. The procedure also included endolaser photocoagulation and silicone-gas exchange. The eye nevertheless developed retinal detachment with proliferative vitreoretinopathy and cataract. In December 1994, further surgery was performed, which consisted of phacoemulsification, removal of epiretinal membrane, 180 degree retinectomy, endolaser photocoagulation, and silicone oil fill.

In April 1995, the retina was flat with an epiretinal membrane covering the inferior margin of the coloboma and a fibrovascular scar partially obscuring the optic disc. It was decided that the silicone oil should be left in place because of the high risk of retinal detachment. When reviewed in February 1999, the vision was hand movements and there was band keratopathy, which precluded ophthalmoscopy. Enucleation was performed because it was not possible to screen the eye adequately for local tumour recurrence. At the time of surgery, an extracocular tumour nodule was noted medial to the optic nerve. The tumour nodule measured approximately 8 mm by 6 mm.

Pathological examination showed the recurrent tumour to be of mixed, spindle, and epithelioid cell type. The tumour appeared to arise within the sclera because of the way in which it was encapsulated by the scleral lamellae. The presence of nerve tissue within the tumour suggested that the melanoma had entered the sclera along a channel for a ciliary nerve. Posteriorly, the tumour had broken through the sclera into the orbit.

COMMENT

To our knowledge, this is the first report of intrascleral recurrence of choroidal melanoma after transretinal endoresection. The tumour probably survived the surgery and phototherapy because it had invaded a scleral canal adjacent to the optic nerve.

It is known that intrascleral tumour deposits can survive after phototherapy or transscleral local resection of choroidal melanoma. In the present case, the adjunctive phototherapy after completion of the tumour resection was either of insufficient power or was not applied to the area where the scleral invasion had taken place. A more effective method of eliminating residual intrascleral tumour would have been to administer adjunctive plaque radiotherapy, which is routine after transscleral local resection in some centres. In the present case, however, this would probably have caused optic neuropathy.

Recurrent tumour after transscleral local resection is associated with an adverse prognosis for survival. It is not known, however, whether the recurrence is the source of metastasis or merely an indicator of tumour aggression.

Further follow up studies are required to determine the incidence of intrascleral tumour recurrence after endoresection of choroidal melanoma.

B DAMATO
D WONG
St Paul’s Eye Unit,
Royal Liverpool University Hospital
F D GREEN
Department of Ophthalmology,
Aberdeen Royal Hospitals
J M MACKENZIE
Department of Pathology,
Aberdeen Royal Hospitals

Correspondence to: Professor B Damato, St Paul’s Eye Unit, Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Prescot St, Liverpool L7 8XP, UK
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pleomorphic epithelioid melanoma cells. (A)

Figure 2 Histopathology discloses large pleomorphic epithelioid melanoma cells. (A) Haematoxylin and eosin, (B) bleach, both original magnifications ×50.

and B-scan] showed an acoustically hollow, pedunculated mass in the ciliary body region measuring 10 mm in thickness. Ciliary body melanoma was diagnosed and the eye was enucleated.

Histopathological examination revealed a heavily pigmented multilobulated tumour arising from the pars plana (Fig 1B). The highly cellular tumour was composed of a mixture of spindle and epithelioid cells with a predominance of epithelioid cells. About 15–20% of the tumour was composed of melanophages within extensive areas of necrosis (Fig 2). No mitotic figures were identified. The cataractous lens was partially encased and dislocated by tumour. Parts of the iris, ciliary body, and choroid were heavily pigmented and dendritic melanocytes were observed within the sclera and on the episcleral surface, especially near the optic nerve. These findings were consistent with sector uveal melanocytosis. The histopathological diagnosis was ciliary body melanoma and sector uveal melanocytosis.

The patient had been followed for 10 years and has no evidence of local or systemic metastases.

COMMENT

Uveal melanoma is very rare in children and adolescents. Shields and associates reported that approximately 1% of all uveal melanoma patients are 20 years of age or younger at diagnosis. In no case has any of these young patients presented with leucocoria. Ciliary body melanoma in both children and adults is usually asymptomatic and can remain a large mass before it is recognised clinically. The most common presenting manifestations of ciliary body melanoma include dilated episcleral vessels in the quadrant of the eye, secondary hypertension or glaucoma, and subluxation of lens with visual aberration.

Cataract rarely develops in eyes with retinoblastoma despite the presence of a large tumour. Therefore, leucocoria from cataract is an unusual presenting sign of an intraocular tumour in a child, especially ciliary body melanoma and we are unaware of any previous report of this occurrence.

One condition associated with the development of uveal melanoma is oculocutaneous melanocytosis. Ocular melanocytosis generally presents as excessive pigmentation in the subcutaneous periorcular skin, epidermis, uvea, orbit, and meninges. The lifetime risk for uveal melanoma in a patient with ocular melanocytosis is approximately 0.25%.

Verdaguer found that four of seven young patients under age 20 years with uveal melanoma had ocular melanocytosis. It is possible that sector melanocytosis may have predisposed to the development of melanoma in this case.

The prognosis for large uveal melanoma generally is poor. Barr and associates reported that the 15 year survival for posterior uveal melanoma in children and adolescents was 75%, suggesting that this does not differ from its adult counterparts. They showed that a large tumour size of 10 mm or greater and extraocular extension were poor prognostic features. Shields and associates also found that large tumour size was an important predictive factor of metastatic disease in children with uveal melanoma. Despite the large size of the tumour in our patient, no mitotic activity was found on histopathological examination. This may explain the continued survival of our patient.

In conclusion, we report a case of ciliary body melanoma in a 9 year old child who presented initially with a tumour induced cataract. A unilateral cataract in a child deserves an evaluation for common and rare conditions such as ciliary body melanoma.

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HAKAN DEMIRCI
CAROL L SHIELDS
JERRY A SHIELDS
SANTOSH G HONAVAR

Oncology Service, Wills Eye Hospital, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA, USA

RALPH C EAGLE, JR
Pathology Department

Correspondence to: Dr Carol L Shields, Oncology Service, Wills Eye Hospital, 900 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, USA

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Spontaneous extrusion of subconjunctival cysticercus cellulosae

EDITOR.—Cysticercus cellulosae, the larval form of Taenia solium (tapeworm), often affects the human eye. Human infection occurs on eating raw or inadequately cooked infected pork, consuming food or water contaminated with faecal matter containing the ova, or as a result of autoinfection. Sommering first reported a case of ocular cysticercosis. The parasite’s most favoured site in the subconjunctival space is the orbital cavity. Invasion of the globe is rare. We report a case of subconjunctival cysticercosis in which there occurred spontaneous extrusion.

CASE REPORT

A young 7 year boy presented with redness and swelling in the right eye. General physical and systemic examination revealed no abnormality. The right eye had a smooth, pinkish, hemispherical, subconjunctival, cystic swelling of approximately 8–9 mm size near the inner canthus (Fig 1). It was loosely adherent to the eyeball, non-reducible, and was mildly tender. The conjunctival vessels over and around it were mildly congested. The left eye was normal. An ultrasound of the right eye done with a waterbath revealed a subconjunctival...
A subconjunctival cyst at the inner canthus of the right eye.

Figure 1

A cyst with a central echogenic nodule suggestive of a cysticercus cellulosae (Fig 2). Excision of the cyst was planned, but the patient reported a week later with history of spontaneous expulsion of a small balloon-like translucent structure from the eye after which the swelling subsided. Repeat slit lamp examination did not show any swelling in the eye though there was redness and a conjunctival rent close to the inner canthus. An ultrasound examination was normal and the cyst seen earlier was not present.

COMMENT

Cysticercosis has a global distribution particularly in countries where there is increased incidence of pork eating. Ocular dissemination of cysticercus cellulosae is well known and is evident from several reports in the literature. The most favoured site is the vitreous and subretinal space followed by subconjunctival tissue and extraocular muscles. The cysticercus in the present case was subconjunctival and there was spontaneous expulsion. Since 1970 only six cases of spontaneous extrusion of cysticercus from subconjunctival space have been reported. In the three cases reported by Bansal et al the cyst was located within the medial rectus muscle in the first case, in the subconjunctival space in the second case, and in the superior orbit in the third case from where they were extruded. In the present case the cystic swelling was present near the inner canthus of the eye with attachment to the underlying muscle sheath. In orbital and subconjunctival cysticercosis the cyst is usually attached to the muscle sheath, where it induces an inflammatory reaction and because of its constant motility it erodes through the conjunctiva and comes out leaving a rent in the conjunctiva which ultimately heals within a short period. This case report highlights the importance of ultrasound in such lesions and should be the primary mode of investigation. On ultrasound the cyst is seen as a sonolucent area with well defined anterior and posterior margin with the presence of a central echodense, curvilinear highly reflective structure within the cyst, that of a scolex.

SARITA MAGU

Department of Radiology, Pt BDM Sharma PGIMS, Rohtak, India

MANISHA NADA
A K KHURANA

JP CHUGH

Department of Ophthalmology

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Massive basal cell carcinoma in a schizophrenic patient: treatment options and constraints

EDITOR—Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common malignant tumour of the eyelids and face. Factors which increase the chance of orbital invasion include a medial canthal location, slow indolent growth, morpheaform growth pattern, surgical recurrence, advanced presentation, and neglect. Orbital invasion predisposes to intracranial involvement by direct or perineural spread. Management of orbital invasion is difficult and requires a multidisciplinary team approach for radical surgery and/or radiotherapy.

We present a 76 year old Ukrainian man with a neglected tumour on his forehead which had spread over several years to involve the upper eyelids, anterior orbit, and ethmoid sinuses.

CASE REPORT

A 76 year old man with a long history of untreated forehead BCC complained of deteriorating vision in his right eye and ocular discharge. He had been admitted by the care of the elderly unit, for social reasons. He was a known paranoid schizophrenic treated with psychotropic drugs. Four years previously his physician had measured the lesion as being 2 cm × 4 cm and recommended plastic surgery, which was declined.

There was a massive, fungating lesion of the forehead, superior orbits, and nasal bridge, at least 15 cm × 17 cm (Fig 1). The right uncorrected visual acuity was 6/24 and left only light perception (unable to use a pin hole). There was fixed ptosis and right lower eyelid involuntarional excetration. There was an opaque left cornea. The right fundus was normal. He did not permit intraocular pressure measurement.

Investigations included a computed tomograph (CT) scan to evaluate the extent of tumour invasion and an incisonal biopsy for histopathological diagnosis. The CT scan showed extensive soft tissue destruction, loss of the nasal bone, frontal sinuses, and bilateral anterior ethmoid, and extracranial orbital invasion (Fig 2). Histopathology confirmed extensive solid basal cell carcinoma.

He received symptomatic care with lid cleansing and topical chloramphenicol. A low visual aid assessment was arranged. Palliative radiotherapy was recommended but he refused all treatment including the low vision assessment.

The patient underwent a thorough mental status examination, which confirmed well controlled schizophrenia. We were not empowered to detain him for treatment against his will. He discharged himself from hospital with an untreated fungating BCC.

COMMENT

This patient had a neglected BCC which had caused destruction of soft tissue and bone, with orbital invasion and was threatening the vision in his remaining eye.

Where advanced scalp cancer displays deep invasion, radical excision and reconstruction are indicated. Some authors suggest that aggressive surgical management of advanced skin neoplasia is the only treatment to produce long term survival. In malignant cutaneous tumours involving the anterior skull base, invasion of the dura mater significantly affects survival. In particular, spread along the medial orbital wall can lead to meningeal infiltration by direct invasion. As with squamous cell carcinoma, large basal cell carcinomas can invade the central nervous system by...
perineural spread. Our patient risks spread of the tumour along the supraorbital and supra- 

trochlear nerves. When local surgical therapy fails to prevent recurrence or definitive surgical resection is not possible, as in this case, alternative thera-

pies must be considered. Opinions vary on the roles and efficacy of radiation therapy and chemotherapy for extensive lesions. Cisplatin and doxorubicin have been reported to achieve complete remission of recurrent invasive BCC of the medial canthus and orbit at 5 years. Using adjunctive radiotherapy, large BCCs of the head showed partial to complete response but no cures achieved. A complete response was defined as disappearance of all measurable lesions (but cancer cells are still present microscopically) and a partial re-

sponse was 50% reduction in all lesions.

Patients with large or aggressive skin cancer are fortunately uncommon and management should be individualised following discussion with both the patient and his/her family. The options include a combination of surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy with every effort made to preserve vision.

Our elderly, schizophrenic patient declined treatment and in these circumstances symp-

toms that can be offered. Legal issues prevent forced treatment.

Informed consent includes providing ade-

quate information about the treatment to make a reasoned decision. Obtaining consent must be free of coercion or threats, which would affect the patient’s decision. The patient must be presumed competent unless shown otherwise. Psychiatric assessment con-

firmed that this patient was competent to make his own decisions. Exceptions include if immediate need is needed and the patient is unable to provide it (in coma or insufficient time to obtain it), the patient is legally incompetent to make a treatment deci-

sion, or decides to waive the right to be fully informed.

Untreated, the outlook for this patient is grim.

MOHAMMED MUHTASEB
JANE M OLIVER
Eye Department, Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF, UK

SHARON CONSTANTINE
Pathology Department

Correspondence to: Jane M Olver
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1 Glover TA, Grove AS. Orbital invasion by malign-

2 Fitzpatrick PJ, Thompson GA, Easterbrook WA, et al. Basal and squamous cell carci-

noma of the eyelids and their treatment by radio-

4 Thomas WO, Harper LL, Wong SG, et al. Surgi-

7 Robinson JK. Use of a combination of chemo-

therapy and radiation therapy in the manage-


Spontaneous resolution of eyeball displacement caused by maxillary sinusitis

EDITOR,—Spontaneous displacement of the eyeball caused by maxillary sinusitis is rare but is well documented.1–4 Different treat-

ments have been suggested but all are surgical. Spontaneous enophthalmos due to maxillary sinusitis was first described by Montgomer5; there have since been a series of reports describing this condition. The mechanism appears to arise from obstruction of the osteomeatal complex which impairs sinus ventilation. The resorption of retained secretions within the sinus produces a nega-

tive pressure which results in erosion of the thin orbital floor.6 In the absence of trauma the triad of obstructive sinus disease, diminu-

ted antral volume, and enophthalmos has been thought to be caused by inflammatory resorption and inferior displacement of the orbital floor.7 The globe is also displaced downwards and backwards such that the patient will have a narrow palpebral fissure and a deep superior sulcus above the eye.8

CASE REPORT
A 29 year old white male presented to the ophthal-

mology clinic having noticed that his right eye had been at a lower level than left one for the previous 2 years. There was no history of trauma. There were no nasal com-

plaints or past history of sinusitis. On examination, the right globe was displaced inferiorly by 5–6 mm. Ophthalmic examina-

tion, including a visual acuity cover test and ocular movements were otherwise normal. A computed tomograph (CT) scan showed an opaque right maxillary antrum which was hypoplastic. The floor of the orbit was eroded and the right eyeball had sunk into the antrum (Fig 1).

He was seen in the ENT clinic and listed for an endoscopic middle meatal antrostomy and repair of the orbital floor. The patient changed his address and we were unable to contact him. Three years later, he contacted the ENT department to inquire about his appointment. We advised him that a further review might be beneficial. When reviewed the right eye was noted to be in a normal position. A repeat scan was undertaken which showed a well aerated right maxillary sinus which was larger than on the previous CT scan. The right orbital floor appeared well ossified and at a higher level than before (Fig 2). In view of these findings, it was decided that no further management was required.

Figure 1 CT scan showing hypoplastic opaque right maxillary antrum, eroded right orbital floor, and sunken right eyeball.

COMMENT
In this case report the support of the orbital floor was presumably lost secondary to block-

age of osteomeatal complex and subsequent inflammatory changes and/or pressure changes within the antrum. Previous reports have advocated the surgical reconstitution of the orbital floor at an early stage.6,7 Maxillary sinusitis is frequently a self resolving disease, as occurred in this case. Resolution of maxillary sinusitis, inflammatory and pressure components that produced the displacement of eyeball appears to have taken place. In the absence of negative pressure in the maxillary antrum and with orbital floor periosteum intact, new bone was laid down to reform the orbital floor with subsequent repositioning of the globe.

This case raises the question as to whether surgical intervention is required in these cases if the maxillary sinus disease can be treated or resolves of its own accord. Should medical or conservative management be inadequate then it can be hypothesised that a simple middle meatal antrostomy may be enough, following which the orbital floor might reform without need for reconstruction. The authors suggest this as a hypothesis extrapolating from the events that occurred in this patient.

U RAGHAVAN
Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Queen’s Medical Centre, University Hospital, Nottingham NG7 2UH, UK

R DOWNES
Department of Ophthalmology

N S JONES
Department of Otorhinolaryngology

Correspondence to: Professor N S Jones
nick.jones@nottingham.ac.uk
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2 Beasley NJP, Jones NS, Downes RN. Enophtali-


Familial thombophilia and normal tension glaucoma

EDITOR,—The aetiology of normal tension glaucoma (NTG) is still debatable. Abnormal blood flow, systemic hypertension, abnormal blood coagulability, and other factors associated with cerebrovascular disease may have a causative role in NTG.1 A study was designed to look at the prevalence of familial thrombophilia in cases of NTG.

Figure 2 CT scan of the same patient after 3 years which shows reossified right orbital floor which is at a higher level than previously.

2 Beasley NJP, Jones NS, Downes RN. Enophtali-


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EDITOR,—The aetiology of normal tension glaucoma (NTG) is still debatable. Abnormal blood flow, systemic hypertension, abnormal blood coagulability, and other factors associated with cerebrovascular disease may have a causative role in NTG.1 A study was designed to look at the prevalence of familial thrombophilia in cases of NTG.
CASE REPORT
Seventy-two patients were identified from ophthalmological database records with the diagnosis of NTG (defined as intraocular pressure <21 mm Hg, open drainage angle on gonioscopy, absence of any secondary cause for a glaucomatous optic neuropathy, and typical optic disc cupping which correlates for a glaucomatous optic neuropathy, and gonioscopy, absence of any secondary cause) diagnosis of NTG (defined as intraocular ophthalmological database records with the

In trying to discover the aetiology of NTG, some studies have suggested that these patients may have altered rheology producing a greater tendency to thrombosis.1 3 There is also evidence of activation of the coagulation cascade and fibrinolytic pathway but there is no conclusive evidence of a general vascular aetiology in the causation of NTG.2 7

The factor V Leiden mutation is a common hereditary abnormality with a 1–8% prevalence of heterozygous carriers depending on geographic location and accounts for the majority of activated protein C resistance. It is known that familial thrombophilia greatly increases the risk of venous thrombosis but it must be stressed that the most people with the Leiden mutation will not experience a thrombotic event. The prothrombin G20210A variant is another common abnormality with a carrier prevalence of 1–4% being more common in southern Europe and, like the Leiden mutation, rare in people from Asian or African descent. An association of the prothrombin variant and the factor V Leiden mutation with arterial disease has not been demonstrated convincingly and this therefore questions the role of these prothrombotic factors in the causation of ocular events suggested, in part, to be due to poor arterial supply. With this in mind, and the non-significant prevalence of factor V Leiden between the patient and control groups, it led us to conclude that the heterogeneous state of factor V Leiden in patient 23 did not have a causative role in her glaucoma though may have contributed to her deep vein thrombosis.

Retinal artery and vein occlusions have been documented with hyperhomocysteinaemia. A raised homocysteine level has many causes and the haematological and vascular abnormalities associated with hyperhomocysteinaemia lead to a proatherogenic and prothrombotic metabolic environment.1 6 Levels can be easily reduced with dietary folic acid supplementation, with or without vitamin B12, but it is unknown if this reduces the risk of vascular disease. It is also unknown if the strong link of hyperhomocysteinaemia and cardiovascular events is actually causal. Both patients in the study with hyperhomocysteinaemia were commenced on folic acid and subsequent levels of homocysteine were in the normal range.

COMMENT

Other hereditary thrombophilic conditions, such as protein C and protein S deficiency, and antiphospholipid antibodies have been reported in association with ocular vascular pathology and a combination of these factors may further increase the risk of hypercoagulability. The low levels of antithrombin and protein C, as seen in patient 20, are thought not to be thrombophilic.

It is unlikely that familial thrombophilia plays a significant aetiological role in NTG. A larger study is needed to confirm our findings.

On the available evidence, thrombophilia screening in patients with NTG is not indicated.

Previous poster presentation at the Royal College of Ophthalmologists’ annual congress, Harrogate 2000.

O C BACKHOUSE M J MENAGE B A MCMERRY Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds, UK

Correspondence to: O Backhouse, Department of Ophthalmology, Leeds General Infirmary, Leeds LS1 3EX, UK

obackhouse@hotmail.com

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The wide field multifocal ERG reveals a retinal defect caused by vigabatrin toxicity.

EDITOR,—Vigabatrin is an effective drug for controlling chronic epilepsy and is taken more commonly in conjunction with additional antiepileptic drugs. There has been increasing subjective evidence that this drug may be associated with visual field defects.1 2 We report here the interesting results we found from wide field multifocal ERGs performed on a patient taking vigabatrin.

CASE REPORT
A 52 year old white man was referred to the eye clinic with a 6 month history of bumping into objects. His optician reported a bilateral inferonasal and nasal field deficit. On examination his visual acuity was 6/6, N5 with correction, Ishihara 17/17 in each eye and intraocular pressures were 19 mm Hg. He had a full range of ocular movements and pupil reactions were normal. There was a mild pallor to both optic discs.

Table 1 Patient details

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discs and a spontaneous venous pulsation was present. Both maculae were healthy. Hummefry central 30-2 threshold visual fields recorded peripheral constriction within 10° of fixation. Blood pressure was 162/88 and urinalysis was negative. There was no significant family history nor did he have any history of night blindness. His medical history included epilepsy, for which he commenced anticonvulsant treatment in 1966. Despite a variety of drug regimens he never had adequate control of his symptoms until February 1999, when 1000 mg twice daily of vigabatrin was added to a regimen of carbamazepine, sodium valproate, and propranolol. Although the patient has been informed of the associated risk of visual field loss; he has elected to remain on vigabatrin treatment. In November 1999 he was referred for conventional electrophysiological investigations, including electro-oculogram (EOG), visual evoked cortical potentials (VECP), and electroretinograms (ERG). All tests were performed in accordance with current ISCEV international standards. Findings were similar to other reports in that VEPs were normal, his EOGs were deemed to be equivocal in that the Arden index was >1.7 but <1.9. There was a small reduction in cone and maximal response of the left eye in the ERG and a significant reduction of oscillatory potentials in both eyes (Table 1).

COMMENT

Advances in electrophysiological techniques have enabled topographical maps of retinal function to be constructed. Wide field (90 degree) multifocal stimulation of the retina was performed using a custom built system with a 61 hexagonal display digitally back projected onto a polysilicon screen.

Multifocal electroretinograms were performed in June 2000, results showed good correlation with visual findings in determining the area of visual loss. Normal retinal function was recorded in the central 40° of both eyes. However, a delay in implicit timings occurred with eccentricity; more importantly there were marked reductions in peripheral b-wave amplitudes which may be suggestive of retinal toxicity. These results were consistent in both eyes. Figure 1 depicts MFERG responses of the patients left eye in comparison with the left eye of a normal subject.

The wide field multifocal ERG technique is the only objective tool for assessing the effect of vigabatrin toxicity on the peripheral retina. Currently, a larger clinical study utilising this technique is under way. We are confident that this technique will help to answer many of the unresolved issues associated with this form of treatment.

Table 1  Conventional electrophysiology findings

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<tr>
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<td>cone response</td>
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<td>30 Hz flicker</td>
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<tr>
<th>ElectroDiagnostic Imaging Unit, Tennent Institute of Ophthalmology, Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow, UK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence to: Miss Jo McDonagh, ElectroDiagnostic Imaging Unit, Tennent Institute of Ophthalmology, Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow G12 0YN, UK</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:j.mcdonagh@clinmed.gla.ac.uk">j.mcdonagh@clinmed.gla.ac.uk</a></td>
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Figure 1  Left eye wide field multifocal ERG results from patient taking vigabatrin shown against results from a normal patient with no ocular pathology. (A) Multifocal waveforms show reduction in peripheral field retinal function, note areas of reduced b-wave amplitudes. (B) Normal multifocal waveforms. (C, D) Topographical maps of retinal function. (E, F) Plan view topographical maps.

S PARKS

ElectroDiagnostic Imaging Unit, Tennent Institute of Ophthalmology, Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow, UK