MAILBOX

Acute posterior vitreous detachment

EDITOR,—We read Tanner et al’s paper on the predictive value of vitreous pigment (Schaf-her’s sign) for retinal breaks in posterior vitreous detach-ment with great interest. Based on their figures, patients who have a negative Schaffer’s sign had a 1% chance of having a retinal tear and a 0.8% chance of hav-ing a lesion where prophylaxis was thought to be appropriate. Thus, Schaffer’s sign has a negative predictive value of 99% in their series. They go on to recommend that if vitreous pig-ment is present then the patient should be referred for urgent vitreoretinal opinion while those with no pigment should be referred on a less urgent basis.

We would like to put these findings in perspective. The incidence of retinal breaks in patients aged 10 years or more who do not have any history of ocular disease is 6–14%. Retinal breaks have been found in 37/250 (14.8%) of necropsy eyes with posterior vitreous detach-ment by Foos. The incidence of retinal detachment is approximately 120 000 per 100 000 of the general population per year. This suggests that less than 0.2% people with a retinal break eventually have a detachment of the retina. This value may be higher in patients with a symptomatic posterior vitreous detachment; however, it is reasonable to conclude that only a minority of retinal breaks will on go to cause a retinal detachment. Prophylactic treatment of retinal breaks by laser or cryotherapy is not without complications; also detachments can occur in eyes that have had prophylactic treat-ment. Byer has reported that retinal breaks in unoperated eyes with posterior vitreous det-achment that need treatment can be followed up without treatment, with only a minority progressing to retinal detachments.

We have a test that has a negative predictive value of 99%. We know that only a minority of patients who have a retinal tear or hole actually benefit from prophylactic treatment. Can we still justify referring all patients with a posterior vitreous detachment and no vitreous pigment for a specialist examination or even a follow up examination in the light of this knowledge?

The appropriate recommendation would be that all patients presenting with posterior vitreous detachment, no vitreous pigment, and no retinal tears or holes at initial examination can be safely discharged with an explanation of the warning symptoms which should prompt the patient to reattend.

M GUPTA
S PRASAD
Department of Ophthalmology, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JF, UK
Correspondence to: Mr Mohit Gupta

Reply

EDITOR,—We thank Gupta and Prasad for their interest and comments on our recent paper. We agree that the majority of retinal breaks probably do not progress to cause retinal detachment but suggest caution in the interpretation of data relating to asymptomatic rather than symptomatic tears, the latter having been shown to be associated with sub-sequent detachment in approximately 30% of cases. It is the management of recent onset, symptomatic posterior vitreous detach-ment (PVD) and associated retinal breaks which we address in this review. The rationale for treating fresh, symptomatic retinal breaks has been reviewed by numerous authors and is best summarised in the recently published text, Anterior uveitis is an important and common cause of uveal morbidity. Drs Ben Ezra, Ohno, Secchi, and Ali along with their contributors, Drs De Kozak, Forrester, Caspers-Velu, LeHoang, McCluskey, Okada, and Whitcup provide a comprehensive yet concise summary of this field in their recently released text, which was prepared under the auspices of the International Ocular Inflammation Society. Each of the eight chapters contained in this book are clearly written, well referenced, and accompanied by a number of very nice tables and illustrations, many of which are in full colour. Although by no means encyclopaedic, this manual includes excellent overviews of the clinical characteristics of all of the important causes of anterior uveitis, as well as systematic approaches to diagnosis, treatment, and surgery in patients with anterior uveitis.

EMMETT’T CUNNINGHAM, JR

NOTICES

Vision 2020: cataract outcomes

The latest issue of Community Eye Health (35) discusses cataract surgery outcomes. For further information please contact Community Eye Health, International Centre for Eye Health, Institute of Ophthalmology, 11–43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9EL. (Tel: (+44) (0) 20-7608 6909/6910/6923; fax: (+44) (0) 7250 3207; email: eyeresource@uel.ac.uk) Annual subscription £25. Free to workers in developing countries.

Second Sight

Second Sight, a UK based charity whose aims are to eliminate the backlog of cataract blind in India by the year 2020 and to establish strong links between Indian and British ophthalmologists, will be sending volunteer surgeons to India early in 2001. Details can be found at the charity website at www.second-sight.org.uk or by contacting Dr Lucy Mathen (email address lucymathen@yahoo.com).

Office of Continuing Medical Education

A symposium “Randomised trials in ophthal-mology: past, present, future” will be held 2–3 April 2001 at the Thomas B Turner Building, Johns Hopkins University School of Medi-cine, Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Further details: Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Office of Continuing Medical Educa-tion, Turner 20, 720 Rutland Avenue, Balti-more, MD 21205-2195, USA (tel: (410) 955-2959; fax: (410) 955-0807; email: cmnet@jhmi.edu).

BOOK REVIEW


Anterior uveitis is an important and common cause of uveal morbidity. Drs Ben Ezra, Ohno, Secchi, and Ali along with their contributors, Drs De Kozak, Forrester,

Optometry 01
Optometry 01 will take place on 21–23 April 2001 with more than 100 events—lectures and workshops—at the Atrium Gallery, NEC, Birmingham, UK. Further details: tel: 0207 261 9661; email: info@optometry01.co.uk; website: www.optometry01.co.uk.

14th Annual Meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons
The 14th Annual Meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons will be held in the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg, Germany on 17–20 May 2001. Further details: MCN Medizinische Congress-organisation Nuremberg AG, Zentralbüro, Jungfernhofstrasse 25, D-90478 Nuremberg, Germany (tel: ++49-911-3931621; fax: ++49-911-3931620; email: doerflinger@mcn-nuernberg.de).

European Association for the Study of Diabetic Eye Complications (EASDEC)
The next meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetic Eye Complications (EASDEC) will be held in Paris, France, on 19–20 May 2001. Further details: Colloquium, 12 Rue de la Croix Faubin, 75 557 Paris Cedex 11, France (tel: +33-1-44 64 15 15; fax: +33-1-44 64 15 10; email: s.mundler@colloquium.fr).

2nd Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Treatment of Autoimmune Disorders 2001
The 2nd Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Treatment of Autoimmune Disorders 2001 will take place on 7–9 June 2001 at the University of Kiel, Schittenhelmstrasse 7, D-24105 Kiel, Germany. Further details: Prof Dr Med Michael Sticherling, Department of Dermatology, University of Kiel, Schittenhelmstrasse 7, D-24105 Kiel, Germany (tel: +49-431 597 1512; fax: +49-431 597 1611; email: msticherling@dermatology.uni-kiel.de).

14th World Congress of the International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine
The 14th World Congress of the International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine is to be held at the Royal College of Physicians, London on 15–16 March 2002. Further details: Conference Secretariat, CCI Ltd, 2 Palmerston Court, Palmerston Way, London SW8 4AJ, UK (tel: + 44 (0) 20 7720 0600; fax: + 44 (0) 20 7720 7177; email: melanoma@confcomm.co.uk; website: www.confcomm.co.uk/Melanoma).

American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine—Millennium Ultrasound Course Series
A course entitled “Obstetrical and Gynaecological Ultrasound” will be held in New York City, NY, on 24–26 August 2001. Further details: Stacey Blessing, Public Relations Coordinator, AIUM, 14750 Sweitzer Lane, Suite 100, Laurel, MD 20707-5906, USA (tel: 301-498-4100; email: sbessling@aium.org).

1st Cambridge Ophthalmological Symposium
The 1st Cambridge Ophthalmological Symposium will be held 3–5 September 2001 at St John’s College Cambridge. The subject is Retinal Detachment. Further details: COS Secretariat, Cambridge Conferences, The Lawn, 33 Church Street, Great Shelford, Cambridge CB2 5EL, UK (tel: 01223 847464; fax: 01223 847465; email: b.ashworth@easynet.co.uk).

1st Asia Pacific Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care
The 1st Asia Pacific Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care will be held from 19–21 September 2001 in Sydney, Australia. Presented by the BMJ Publishing Group (London, UK) and Institute for Healthcare Improvement (Boston, USA), with the support of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (Australia), Safety and Quality Council (Australia), NSW Health (Australia) and Ministry of Health (New Zealand). Further details: quality@bma.org.uk; fax +44 (0) 7383 0869.

41st St Andrew’s Day Festival Symposium on Therapeutics
The 41st St Andrew’s Day Festival Symposium on Therapeutics will be held on 6–7 December 2001 at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Further details: Ms Eileen Strawn, Symposium Co-ordinator (tel: 0131 225 7324; fax: 0131 220 4393; email: e.strawn@rcpe.ac.uk; website: www.rcpe.ac.uk).

4th International Conference on the Adjuvant Therapy of Malignant Melanoma
The 4th International Conference on the adjuvant therapy of malignant melanoma will be held at The Royal College of Physicians, London on 21–25 April 2002 in Sydney, Australia. Further details: Congress Secretariat, C/- ICMS Australia Pty Ltd, GPO Box 2609, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia (tel: +61 2 9241 1478; fax: +61 2 9251 3552; email: ophthalm@icmsaust.com.au; website: www.ophthalmology.aust.com).

XXIth International Congress of Ophthalmology
The XXIth International Congress of Ophthalmology will be held on 21–25 April 2002 in Sydney, Australia. Further details: Secretariat, Cambridge Conferences, The Lawn, 33 Church Street, Great Shelford, Cambridge CB2 5EL, UK (tel: 01223 847464; fax: 01223 847465; email: b.ashworth@easynet.co.uk).

International Society for Behçet’s Disease
The International Society for Behçet’s Disease was inaugurated at the 9th International Congress on Behçet’s Disease. Professor Shigeaki Ohno represents the ophthalmology division (Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine, Sapporo, Japan: tel: +81-11-716-1161 (ext 5944); fax +81-11-736-0952; email: sohno@med.hokudai.ac.jp).

The 10th International Congress on Behçet’s Disease will be held in Berlin 27–29 June 2002. Further details: Professor Ch Zouboulis (email: zoubbere@zedat.fu-berlin.de).

CORRECTION
In the paper published in the February issue of the BJO (2001,85:173–8) by Newsom et al, there was an error in Figure 4 (p 176). The axes are wrongly labelled. The y axis should read Post-TTα VA and the x axis should be Pre-TTT VA. We apologise for the error.