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LETTERS

Surgically induced diffuse scleritis: comparison of incidence in phacoemulsification and conventional extracapsular cataract extraction

Surgically induced diffuse scleritis (SIDS) is a recognised but less well reported cause of pain and reduced vision following cataract surgery.

We have previously reported on complications of conventional extracapsular cataract extraction in which SIDS was the second most common.

Recently, we conducted a audit of postoperative complications occurring in both groups of patients. However, it does not feature in the list of postoperative complications reported in the National Cataract Survey 1997–8.

SIDS has previously been described as an undiagnosed clinical entity and it may be difficult to recognise its absence from the national statistics.

Patients who had undergone previous ipsilateral iris surgery (trabeculectomy, Scheie’s procedure, or YAG iridotomy) appeared to be at increased risk, although this only attained statistical significance in the phacoemulsification group (p = 0.009).

Total exudative detachment as a first presentation of von Hippel Lindau disease

Von Hippel Lindau disease is a rare condition characterised by retinal and central nervous system haemangioblastomas. It is also associated with renal cell carcinoma, phaeochromocytoma, and renal, pancreatic, and epididymal cysts.

The disease usually presents with neurological symptoms and/or visual disturbance; angiomas if seen in the retina can often be treated in an attempt to prevent progression to retinal detachment.

We report a young girl with von Hippel Lindau disease whose initial presentation was with a total exudative retinal detachment.

Case report

A 14 year old girl presented to the eye casualty department with no perception of light in her left eye. She gave a 2 month history of severe pain, especially waking the patient from sleep. This was a common feature. Examination of the patient both on the slit lamp and in daylight was conducted, the latter to recognise the characteristic violaceous injection of the scleral vascular tree. B-scan ultrasonography is performed to measure scleral thickness. Relative thickening compared to the contralateral eye or absolute thickness greater than 1.8 mm supports the diagnosis. Affected patients usually show a favourable response to a combination therapy with oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents, topical steroids, and a topical cycloplegic. SIDS should be considered in the differential diagnosis of a painful red eye postoperatively. Prompt diagnosis and appropriate therapy lead to early resolution of SIDS and improved visual outcome.
confirmed haemangioblastoma. The possibility of von Hippel Lindau disease was raised and the patient’s father was screened: the diagnosis was confirmed with polymerase chain reaction analysis; showing a frame shift mutation (single base pair deletion [G]) in codon 195 (exon 3) of the von Hippel Lindau gene. Subsequent extended family screening has revealed the same mutation in the patient and nine other living relatives (Fig 2), including the patient’s identical twin. Five of these relatives have clinical manifestations of the disease, and in one case an asymptomatic stage 1 renal cell carcinoma was diagnosed and successfully resected.

Miss AB’s left eye has subsequently developed pupil block glaucoma which is currently well controlled medically. It remains blind with a rigid total retinal detachment. The cause of this detachment is most likely to be an optic nerve or retinal haemangioblastoma; however, no causal lesion was identified on ultrasound or computed tomography (CT). The few retinal vessels that can be seen (Fig 1A) do not show any abnormality. Her other eye remains normal and screening for signs of the disease elsewhere has proved negative.

Comment
This case highlights the importance of considering von Hippel Lindau disease as a diagnosis when confronted with a patient with an unexplained exudative retinal detachment.

Von Hippel Lindau disease has an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern with an incidence of one in 36 000; with a 70% prevalence of ocular haemangioblastomas. Von Hippel Lindau gene mutation carriers have a 35% probability of visual loss by age 50.1 Ocular angiomas occur commonly in the superotemporal mid-peripheral retina, less commonly on the optic disc (8%), and at the posteriort pole (1%).2

If left untreated, lesions can cause vitreous haemorrhage, macular oedema, epiretinal membrane formation, and exudative or tractional retinal detachment. This last complication is well demonstrated in our patient’s case, with a 2 month delay between onset of symptoms and first presentation.

Treatment comprises laser photocoagulation of angiomas less than one disc diameter.3 Cryotherapy, or vitreoretinal surgery with trans-scleral drainage and endolaser may be indicated in larger lesions,4 especially if vitreous traction is present.4 Early treatment necessarily offers a better prognosis.

This case underscores the value of taking a good family history in order to detect hereditary diseases, which can then be confirmed with genetic molecular analysis. The importance of identification and subsequent screening of von Hippel Lindau gene mutation carriers (both affected and unaffected) is exemplified in our patient’s family—with the potential benefit of early diagnosis and treatment of asymptomatic retinal and cerebellar haemangioblastomas, as well as potentially fatal tumours. The screening should be maintained regularly, as the protean manifestations of von Hippel Lindau disease may occur de novo at any age.3

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References

Figure 1 CT scan of the orbits showing dilated superior ophthalmic vein.

Anomalous venous drainage of a plexiform (pial) arteriovenous malformation mimicking an indirect carotidocavernous sinus fistula

We report a case of a 35 year old man who presented with proptosis of the left globe and congested episcleral and retinal veins. We present angiographic evidence to show that the venous engorgement of the left orbit was related to anomalous venous drainage of a previously posteriorly draining parietal arteriovenous malformation (AVM).

Case report
A 35 year old man presented complaining of a 3 month history of a red eye and a 1 month history of progressive swelling and protrusion of the left eye. His only significant past medical history was that of a subarachnoid haemorrhage from an intracranial AVM 7 years previously for which he had undergone stereotactic radiosurgery. Ocular examination revealed a visual acuity of 6/5 in either eye. There was a 5 mm axial displacement of the left globe with normal ocular motility. The proptosis was non-pulsatile, non-reducible, and Valsalva manoeuvre was negative. There was no audible bruit. Anterior segment examination was unremarkable aside from congested episcleral vessels. Examination of the fundus revealed dilated and tortuous retinal veins but a normal arterial system. There was no disc swelling.

A computed tomography (CT) scan of the brain and orbits revealed an AVM in the left primary sensory cortex, proptosis of the left globe and a dilated superior ophthalmic vein (Fig 1). A magnetic resonance image (MRI) with angiography confirmed the presence of an AVM in the left perirolandic region which was fed by the left middle cerebral artery and the pericallosal branch of the left anterior cerebral artery (Fig 2). The dominant venous drainage was via a large superficial vein upwards to the superior sagittal sinus. Although the AVM did not appear to have engorgement at the time of presentation, it was clear that there had been significant changes in the venous structures distant to the AVM. A relative constriction at the junction of the ipsilateral transverse and sigmoid sinuses had developed (Fig 4) and as

Figure 2 Family pedigree.
a consequence there was a relative hold up to the filling of the sigmoid sinus. The AVM therefore now drained anteriorly via a collateral circulation into the cavernous sinus. The later phases of the angiogram revealed that there was relatively little downward venous outflow from the cavernous sinus and the majority of this venous outflow was therefore shunted via the superior ophthalmic vein which was markedly dilated as a consequence. The patient’s symptoms of unilateral proptosis and venous engorgement were therefore a manifestation of an increased blood flow through collateral shunts that had developed as a consequence of a stricture in the principal drainage channel of the existing AVM, which itself had not changed significantly in size.

**Comment**

Arteriovenous malformations (AVM) are lesions which consist of racemose networks of arterial and venous channels which communicate directly rather than through a normal capillary bed. These communications are of two types: fistulous and plexiform. In the fistulous type an arterial channel empties directly into a venous channel, while in the plexiform type one or more arterial channels feed a vascular conglomerate that comprises multiple arteriovenous communications from which one or more venous channels emerge as draining veins. The fistulous types are usually supplied by meningeal branches of the external carotid artery and therefore they are also known as dural AVMs. The plexiform type, in contrast, are supplied by branches of the cerebral or cerebellar arteries and hence are also known as pial AVMs. The AVM most commonly encountered by the ophthalmologist is the acquired caroticocavernous sinus fistula, a dural AVM whose characteristic neuro-ophthalmic presentation results from the arterialisation of the orbital venous system. Proptosis and orbital venous engorgement secondary to direct arterialisation of the venous system has also been reported in dural AVMs involving the torcular herophili and the Galenic system. The more common plexiform (pial) AVMs typically present with complications that arise from the massive venous runoff that is generated by the associated arteriovenous shunts—namely, intracranial haemorrhage, seizures, and recurrent headache.

Symptomatic orbital drainage of plexiform (pial) AVMs is rare and when it does occur the AVM is usually in an anterior location. We describe a patient with a posteriorly located plexiform (pial) AVM who presented with proptosis and orbital venous engorgement of the left globe as a result of the venous outflow of the AVM being shunted anteriorly through newly opened collateral channels. Unilateral proptosis associated with anterior shunting has previously been described in a child with bilateral sigmoid sinus hypoplasia, but has never been described in a patient with a posteriorly located plexiform AVM. Our case is also extremely unusual in that we have angiographic evidence which shows that these collateral channels developed as a result of an acquired stenosis at the junction of the transverse and sigmoid sinus, previously its dominant route of venous drainage. The aetiology of this focal stenosis is unknown. It is unlikely to be a consequence of the stereotactic radiosurgery as the site of the stenosis is remote to the previously treated area. It is more likely that the stenosis represents a response to the chronic endothelial damage that is known to accompany the hyperdynamic circulation of AVMs.

This case serves to illustrate that not all adults who present with proptosis and venous engorgement of the globe have a caroticocavernous sinus fistula and other anomalies of venous drainage must occasionally be considered.
Stenosis at the junction of the transverse and sigmoid sinus.

Multiple newly opened collateral venous channels.

Figure 4 Cerebral angiogram dated 2000. There has been no significant change in the size of the arteriovenous malformation since the angiogram was performed in 1994. There is constriction at the junction of the transverse and sigmoid sinuses with hold up in the transverse sinus. Multiple cortical collateral vessels are seen draining into the cavernous sinus.

References

Childhood myasthenia gravis in an infant

Myasthenia gravis is defined as an acquired autoimmune disorder where there is abnormal fatigability of muscles due to deficiency of acetylcholine receptors caused by circulating antibodies directed against them. Ocular myasthenia is a form of myasthenia gravis clinically involving only the levator palpebrae superioris, the orbicularis oculi, and the extraocular muscles. Ptosis and ophthalmoplegia, both unilateral and bilateral, constitute the only signs in about 20% cases while in about 70% cases, ocular symptoms mark the onset of generalised myasthenia gravis.

Case report

We examined a 10 month old male child who presented to us with complaints of ptosis and ophthalmoplegia of the right eye for a month before presentation. The child was born normally at full term to a healthy young mother with an uneventful prenatal and postnatal period. The milestones of the child were recorded as normal. The child had an older sister aged 3 years who gave no history of similar complaints. There was no history of fever, vomiting, pain, trauma, seizures, difficulty in swallowing or chewing, or any history of excessive lassitude or listlessness given by the parents with regard to the child.

General physical examination revealed a child with normal physical and mental development. Systemic examination revealed no presence of heart block or any other cardiovascular abnormality. Neurological examination revealed no motor weakness or any new neurological symptom. The child was examined twice after a period of sleep and similar findings were recorded again.

Examination of the anterior and posterior segment of both eyes under general anaesthesia was unremarkable. The forced duction test was negative. Based on the above findings, a tentative diagnosis of an intracranial space occupying lesion was made. However, a contrast enhanced computed tomograph (CT) scan of the head and orbit revealed no abnormalities. Cerebral spinal fluid examination was also normal.

The child was subsequently subjected to an edrophonium test (0.15 mg/kg body weight intravenously), which was unequivocally positive with complete resolution of the ptosis and ophthalmoplegia (Fig 2). A repetitive stimulation of the left median nerve demonstrated a significant decremental response (22%). Subsequently, a serum analysis of anti-acetylcholine receptor binding, blocking, and modulating antibodies was performed. Abnormal titres of anti-acetylcholine receptor binding antibodies (5.8 nmol/l; normal is less than 0.8 nmol/l) were present which confirmed the diagnosis of childhood myasthenia gravis. A contrast enhanced CT scan of the thorax was normal. The child was started on tablet neostigmine 3 mg once daily along with oral prednisolone (0.5 mg/kg body weight) and followed up regularly. Marked improvement of the ptosis and ophthalmoplegia was observed which persisted at 1 year of follow up. Systemic steroids were gradually tapered off after 6 months.

Comment

Our patient was diagnosed to have juvenile myasthenia gravis, which comprises approximately 1% of all cases of myasthenia gravis. It
Phototoxic maculopathy following uneventful cataract surgery in a predisposed patient

Operating microscope light induced foveal damage is a well recognised occurrence following ocular surgery including complicated cataract extraction, complex anterior segment procedures, and vitrectomy surgery. An increased risk of phototoxicity is associated with an operating time greater than 100 minutes, increased body and therefore retinal temperature, unfiltred blue light, and hyperoxaemia. Nia with similar clinical and autoimmune is considered to be a variant of adult myasthenia gravis which occurs more commonly in children than 2 years of age, has a familial mode of occurrence, and is not responsive to steroid therapy. Juvenile myasthenia gravis presents usually after 5 years of age, shows no familial occurrence, and is characterised by a definite autoimmune mechanism. Though cases of juvenile myasthenia gravis with age of onset at 2 years or less have been reported, to the best of our knowledge our patient is the youngest patient with the above diagnosis reported so far. We would like to reiterate that investigations to rule out myasthenia gravis should be performed in all patients with acquired ptosis and ophthalmoplegia, irrespective of age.

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Figure 1 Left eye showing two well circumscribed areas of coarse mottled retinal pigment epithelial disturbance.

Figure 2 Fluorescein angiogram of left eye.

Phototoxic lesions are defined as the retinal lesions produced after a relatively short exposure to an intense light source such as the operating microscope. Historically, these lesions were typically located inferior to the fovea as a result of the slight downgaze of the eye during extracapsular cataract surgery and a coaxial microscope beam directed inferior to the fovea. The incidence of retinal phototoxicity from the operating microscope has been reported at between 0% and 28%, with large series reporting angiographic evidence of retinal phototoxicity in 5–7% of cases.

Retinal phototoxic lesions first appear as well circumscribed outer retinal whitening (oedema) with mild disturbances of the RPE, often with a light border visible after a few days. Ophthalmoscopically, a subtle discrete margin can be seen. After the first week, lesions are characterised by coarse alterations of the RPE layer with fluorescein angiography demonstrating characteristic early discrete mottled hyperfluorescence with late staining but no leakage. Certain photosensitising drugs, such as hydroxychloroquine, have been reported to predispose to the development of retinal phototoxic lesions. However, there are no published reports of a similar association with systemic photosensitive conditions such as SLE. It has been suggested that patients who have SLE have increased numbers of chromosome breaks and rearrangements correlated with a low molecular weight clastogenic factor present in lymphocytes that sensitises them to near ultraviolet light (360–400 nm) light. The presence of this photoactivated agent explains why SLE patients show an aggravation of their characteristic skin condition after exposure to sunlight. Certain pharmacological agents, such as hydroxychloroquine, which is used in the treatment of SLE, can also predispose to the development of phototoxicity. The mechanisms behind the predisposition to phototoxicity in humans of chloroquine and its derivatives are less clear. However, it is known that these drugs accumulate in the RPE layer of the retina and can cause drug induced lysosomal abnormalities including diminished vesicle fusion, diminished exocytosis, and reversible “lysosomal storage disease.” These two different predisposing mechanisms to phototoxicity presumably coexisted in this patient and may have significantly increased her risk.

Figure 2 Clinical photograph of the same patient showing marked improvement of the ptosis and ophthalmoplegia after administration of intravenous edrophonium.
Several procedures were undertaken to prevent the occurrence of a phototoxic lesion in the second eye. These included the use of ultraviolet filters on the microscope, although air can also be used in the anterior chamber to deflect the light from the retina as long as the optical axis does not pass through the center of the pupil. The time and power of coaxial illumination from the microscope was minimized by turning the microscope off when in use. The patient’s eye was kept in downgaze so that the operating microscope’s axis was aligned off the patient’s visual axis so that any phototoxic lesion would be extrafoveal and not cause a homonymous scotoma. Since animal studies have demonstrated a benefit of altering core ocular temperature,10 the patient’s body temperature was kept low to reduce the temperature within the eye. Alternatively, irrigation solutions may be cooled relative to room temperature to help reduce intraocular temperature. It has been shown that an increase in inspired oxygen markedly enhances retinal phototoxicity and so a low inspired oxygen concentration was used for the patient during the procedure.11 The patient discontinued hydroxychloroquine in all cases with uveitis.

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References

Bilateral uveitis after intravesical BCG immunotherapy for bladder carcinoma

Intravesical bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) is indicated for the treatment and prophylaxis of carcinoma of the urinary bladder or recurrent papillary tumours.1 All previous reports of uveitis after intravesical BCG therapy have been associated with arthritis.2 3 HLA-B27 has been positive in all cases with uveitis. We describe a patient who is HLA-B27 negative with isolated bilateral uveitis after intravesical BCG therapy.

Case report
A 70 year old man presented to the eye casualty department with a 4 day history of bilateral red, painful, and photophobic eyes. He had no systemic complaints. He had no ophthalmic history of note. He had a medical history of hypertension, gout, and recurrent papillary transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder. Eight weeks previously he had been seen by a urologist for haematuria and increased frequency. A diagnosis of recurrent papillary cell carcinoma was made by cytology and biopsy. A 6 week course of weekly intravesical BCG therapy was commenced. His medications on presentation were Adalat (nifedipine) I n amapril. He was allergic to penicillin and aspirin.

On ocal examination his visual acuities were 6/12 right eye and 6/6 left eye. A diagnosis was made of bilateral acute anterior uveitis. He had 2+ cells and posterior synechiae bilaterally. No keratic precipitates were seen. He had a right sided epiretinal membrane. Laboratory studies showed an erythrocyte sedimentation rate of 66 with the rest of haematological studies normal. Biochemistry showed a raised sodium, urea, and creatinine, which were longstanding. Tests for anti-nuclear antibodies and rheumatoid factor were negative. Angiotensin converting enzyme was normal and Treponema pallidum antibodies were not detected. HLA-B27 was negative. Chest and pelvis radiographs were normal. His uveitis was resolved completely on topical steroid therapy and mydriatics. There was no recurrence of his uveitis over the subsequent follow up period of 3 months.

Comment
There have been no reported cases of intravesical BCG causing isolated uveitis in a patient that is HLA-B27 negative. There have been 26 reported cases of reactive arthritis secondary to intravesical BCG.4 About 8% of these cases were associated with uveitis.5 All the reported cases of combined arthritis and uveitis were HLA-B27 positive.6 7 In the BCG related arthritides the mean time of presenta-
tion was 10.5 days after the last BCG therapy.6 7 Our patient started having ocular symptoms 10 days after his last BCG therapy. In a review of 1278 patients treated with intravesical BCG for bladder cancer, 95% had no complications.8 There were no reported cases of uveitis. Arthritis and arthralgia accounted for 0.5% of the complications.6


NOTICES
Childhood blindness
The latest issue of Community Eye Health (No 40) discusses new issues in childhood blindness, with an editorial by Clare Gilbert, senior lecturer at the International Centre for Eye Health. For further information please contact: Journal of Community Eye Health, International Centre for Eye Health, Institute of Ophthalmology, 1–11 Great Charles Street, London EC1V 2PD, UK (tel: +44 (0)20 7608 6910; fax: +44 (0)20 7250 1207; email: eyecare@jchc.co.uk; website: www.jchc.co.uk). Annual subscription (4 issues) UK£25/US$40. Free to workers in developing countries.

International Centre for Eye Health
The International Centre for Eye Health has published a new edition of the Standard List of
Medicines, Equipment, Instruments and Optical Supplies (2001) for eye care services in developing countries. It is compiled by the Task Force of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. Further details: Sue Stevens, International Centre for Eye Health, 11–43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9RL, UK (tel: +44 (0)20 7608 6910; email: eyeresource@ucl.ac.uk).

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, is regularly sending volunteer surgeons to India. Details can be found at the charity website (www.secondsight.org.uk) or by contacting Dr Lucy Mathen (lucymathen@yahoo.com).

Specific Eye ConditionS (SPECS)

SPecific Eye ConditionS (SPECS) is a not for profit organisation which acts as an umbrella organisation for support groups of any conditions or syndrome with an integral eye disorder. SPECS represents over fifty different organisations related to eye disorders ranging from conditions that are relatively common to very rare syndromes. We also include groups who offer support of a more general nature to visually impaired and blind people. Support groups meet regularly in the Boardroom at Moorfields Eye Hospital to offer support to each other, share experiences and explore new ways of working together. The website www.eyeconditions.org.uk acts as a portal giving direct access to support groups own web site. The SPECS web page is a valuable resource for professionals and may also be of interest to people with a visual impairment or who are blind. For further details about SPECS contact: Kay Parkinson, SPECS Development Officer (tel: +44 (0)1803 524238; email: k@eyeconditions.org.uk; www.eyeconditions.org.uk).

The British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society

The British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society (BRPS) was formed in 1975 to bring together people with retinitis pigmentosa and their families. The principle aims of BRPS are to raise funds to support the programme of medical research into an eventual cure for this hereditary disease, and through the BRPS welfare service, help members and their families copy with the everyday concerns caused by retinitis pigmentosa. Further details: Sue Stevens, International Centre for Eye Health, 11–43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9RL, UK (tel: +44 (0)20 7608 6910; email: eyeresource@ucl.ac.uk).

3rd Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Treatment of Autoimmune Disorders

The 3rd Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Treatment of Autoimmune Disorders will be held in Leipzig, Germany on the 6–8 June 2002. Topics to be covered include: basic aspects of autoimmune diseases, experimental therapeutic concepts, and clinical studies providing novel concepts on established therapies. There will also be the presentation of the Nils-Ilja-Richter Award (application deadline is April 2002, further details on the web site). Further details: Prof. Dr. med. Michael Sticherling, Department of Dermatology, University of Leipzig (email: stichm@medizin.uni-leipzig.de; website: www.autoimmun.org); Fördergesellschaft zur Therapie von Autoimmunerkrankungen e.V. (email: autoimmun.org@gmx.de)

International Society for Behçet’s Disease

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

Singapore National Eye Centre 5th International Meeting

The Singapore National Eye Centre 5th International Meeting will be held on 3–5 August 2002 in Singapore. Further details: Ms Amy Lim, Organising Secretary, Singapore National Eye Centre, 11 Third Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168751 (tel: (65) 322 8374; fax: (65) 227 7290; email: Amy_Lim@sne.com.sg).

BEAVRS Meeting

The next BEAVRS meeting will be held in the Dalmahoy Hotel near Edinburgh on 31 October to 1 November 2002. Further details: Susan Campbell, Medical Secretary, Gartnavel General Hospital (email: susan.j.campbell.wg@northglasgow.scot.nhs.uk).

CORRECTIONS

We regret that an error occurred in a paper that appeared in the May 2001 issue of the BJ O by Lauande-Pimentel et al (Discrimination between normal and glaucomatous eyes with visual field and scanning laser polarimetry measurements, 2001;85:586–91). After revision of the paper the authors found that the published cut-off point of the structural linear discriminant formula (LDF) was incorrect. The original formula described by Lauande-Pimentel et al is: LDF = -3.131 + (0.994 × ellipse modulation) – (0.017 × the number) – (0.086 × average thickness) + (0.111 × ellipse average)
The correct suggested cut-off point, defined as abnormal, is <0.43 instead of <0.547. The use of such formula, with the suggested cut-off point, resulted in an enhancement in the sensitivity (sensitivity = 90.4%, specificity = 82.4%) of the scanning laser polarimeter to detect glaucomatous changes.

An error occurred in the article: Additive effect of unoprostone and latanoprost in patients with elevated intraocular pressure Br J Ophthalmol 2002;86:75–9. The authors should have been listed as Tin Aung, Paul T K Chew, Francis T S Oen, Yiong-Huak Chan, Lennard H Thean, Leonard Yip, Boon-Ang Lim, Jade Soh, and Steve K L Seah.

An error occurred in the article: Fluoxetine oral administration increases intraocular pressure. Br J Ophthalmol 1996;80:678. The authors should have been listed as C Costagliola, I Mastropasqua, I Steardo, N Testa.

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