BJO at a glance

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CENTRAL CORNEAL THICKNESS IN PATIENTS WITH CONGENITAL CATARACTS

It is now well recognised that central corneal thickness has a direct effect on intraocular pressure measurements. Simsek and co-workers studied 43 eyes of 43 aphakic and pseudophakic patients who underwent general cataract surgery. They were contrasted with 44 healthy age and sex matched volunteers. In this study both aphakic and pseudophakic patients who had undergone congenital cataract surgery had significantly thicker corneas than aged matched controls. The reason for this is unclear. Nevertheless, the importance of it in terms of evaluating these patients for glaucoma is obvious.

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PARS PLANAR VITRECTOMY IN PATIENTS WITH CYSTOID MACULAR OEDEMA ASSOCIATED WITH CHRONIC UVEITIS

Advances in vitreoretinal surgery have expanded the indications for vitrectomy. Its use in the treatment of aphakic cystoid macular oedema is reasonably well established. Tranos and co-workers performed a prospective interventional randomised control study of 23 eyes in 23 patients with cystoid macular oedema secondary to chronic intermediate or posterior uveitis that was unresponsive to medical treatment. In this study angiographic improvement occurred in only one third of patients who underwent treatment. Nevertheless, the study documented a significant beneficial effect on visual function and the authors suggest that a large scale trial of pars planar vitrectomy for the treatment of cystoid macular oedema associated with chronic uveitis is warranted.

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RECOGNISING BATTEN DISEASE

The neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses are the commonest neurodegenerative

disorders occurring in childhood. They are devastating disorders in which progressive retinal dystrophy is associated with cerebral degeneration. Because of the autosomal recessive pattern of inheritance early recognition of the disorder and appropriate genetic counselling are essential. Collins and co-workers studied nine patients with neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses and concluded that the diagnosis should be considered in children 10 years of age or less who present with bilateral visual loss and fundus changes ranging from normal through to and including pigmentary/atrophic changes or a distinct bull's eye maculopathy.

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HRT EVALUATION OF OPTIC NEURITIS

Objective identification of nerve fibre dropout in patients with optic neuritis has been documented with red free photography techniques. Scanning laser tomography, however, can be used to produce three dimensional images of the optic nerve head from which a number of anatomical measurements can be obtained. Trip and co-workers investigated 25 patients with a history of unilateral optic neuritis and 15 controls. In this study HRT detects functionally relevant changes in the retinal nerve fibre layer thickness and in neuroretinal rim volume between eyes affected by optic neuritis and unaffected fellow eyes.

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INTRAVITREAL TRIAMCINOLONE FOR DIABETIC MACULAR OEDEMA

The use of intravitreal triamcinolone in the treatment of diffuse diabetic macular oedema has proved to be moderately effective. However, Chan and co-workers report a case series of 10 eyes of 10 patients with diabetic macular oedema who received repeat injections of intravitreal triamcinolone and they document that a repeat injection may not be as effective as the initial injection. Noting the recognised side effects of intravitreal triamcinolone and this decrease in efficacy with repeated injections, the authors suggest that intravitreal triamcinolone may not be the ideal treatment for diabetic macular oedema.

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EXTRAFOVEAL PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY IN AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION

The concept of treatment of subfoveal neovascular membranes in age related macular degeneration by specifically targeting feeder vessels has been considered an attractive therapeutic approach in order to avoid collateral damage to larger retinal areas adjacent to and involving the fovea. Kozak and co-workers treated nine eyes of nine patients with age related macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy. They documented that verteporfin enhanced subfoveal therapy does not cause subfoveal retinal damage and may have potential to improve central vision in subfoveal choroidal neovascularisation caused by exudative macular degeneration. They caution, however, that it is not recommended as a monotherapy for choroidal neovascularisation.

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EFFECTS OF BEVACIZUMAB ON RETINAL FUNCTION

Bevacizumab (Avastin) is a recombinant protein that targets vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF). It has been found to be effective in treating neovascularisation in age related macular degeneration. Lücke and colleagues have studied the effect of bevacizumab on isolated bovine retinas. They conclude that an intraocular application of 0.25 mg/ml bevacizumab for the treatment of choroidal neovascularisation is reasonable. No significant short term effects on retinal function were detected with this dose.

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