RADIO-OPACITY PRODUCED BY A CLINICALLY NORMAL LENS*

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A CASE is reported of a child in whom the lenses of both eyes were radio-opaque despite a normal clinical appearance.

Case Report

A boy born on June 13, 1957, was referred to the Children's Hospital, Birmingham, in 1962, because of a nasopharyngeal infection.

On December 12, 1962, antero-posterior and lateral radiographs were taken of his nasal sinuses; the postero-anterior view is illustrated (see Figure). It was noted by the radiologist that there was an opacity in both eyes corresponding to the position of the lens, confirmed in both films. Six days later the boy was seen in the Eye Department by Mr. Roper-Hall, where clinical examination revealed no abnormality.

Clinical Features.—The visual acuity was 6/6, N 5 in each eye without glasses. The fundi were normal and slit-lamp examination was negative. The boy had had no visual symptoms at any time. His general health was good and, apart from his upper respiratory trouble, no systemic disease was found. His diet had been average throughout his life and he had had no specific treatment at any time. He had always lived in England. There was no family history of eye disease.

Radiography was repeated on April 6, 1964, when the opacity produced by the lens was much less obvious in both eyes. During a careful follow-up no ocular change has been found at any stage.

Comment.—In order to explain this radio-opaque lens the transient presence of some element of high atomic number must be assumed. Firstly, it might be considered that there may have been an element which was selectively absorbed or adsorbed by lens substance, perhaps in a manner analogous to corneal stroma in cystinosis. No visible ocular evidence of this was found, and the boy's general health was excellent. Secondly, it is noted that the lenses had almost cleared radio-logically six months later.

Had there been a systemic absorption and dissemination of some high number element, and was the lens, with its relatively slow metabolic turnover, one of the last sites in the body?

The unusual feature in this case is the radio-opacity without visible change or visual disturbance. I should be most interested to know whether any other ophthalmologists have come across a similar case, as all references to lenses seen on x-ray plates in the radiological and ophthalmic literature are associated with calcification, which can be seen in the eye.

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FIGURE.—Postero-anterior view of nasal sinuses, showing opacity in both eyes.

Summary

The case of a 7-year-old boy is described in whom radio-opacity of the lens in both eyes was found, despite a normal clinical appearance.

I should like to thank Mr. M. J. Roper-Hall for allowing me to publish this report.