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Last Name - Júnior

First Name - Francisco

Middle - Porfírio

Service (sector)

Cornea and External Disease

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Fluorescein Clearance Test (F.C.T.) in the therapeutic orientation of Noninfectious Chronic Keratoconjunctivitis – preliminary results.

Porfírio, N.Jr., Porfírio, Santos, S. Myrna, Barbosa, L.; Gomes, J.A.P.

Purpose: To investigate the importance of Fluorescein Clearance Test (F.C.T.) in the therapeutic orientation of Noninfectious Chronic Keratoconjunctivitis.

Methods: We performed FCT in both eyes of 8 patients (16 eyes) presenting chronic noninfectious keratoconjunctivitis and 2 normal patients (4 eyes). The test was performed as follows: After instillation of 1 drop of 0,5% proparacain, 1 drop of fluorescein was instilled. A standart Schirmer strip was placed over the lateral lower lid margin and into the tear film. After 1 minute, the strip was removed and evaluated visually with the aid of a cobalt blue light. The procedure (except for fluorescein installation) was repeated six times in intervals of 5 minutes (the last with nasal stimulation).

Results: Six patients were male (60%) and 4 female (40%). The mean age was 37 yo (range: 16-70 yo). The initial diagnoses were: dry eye (6 eyes-3patients), allergic conjunctivitis (4 eyes-2patients), chronic punctuate keratitis (2 eyes-1 patient), Mcibomium gland dysfunction (2 eyes-1 patient), chronic ocular irritation (4 eyes-2patients) and 4 normal eyes. In 4 eyes with initial diagnosis of dry eye, both FCT and Schirmer 1 were abnormal. These patients would benefit from punctual occlusion. In 2 eyes, however, Schirmer tests were abnormal and FCT showed that there was an anatomical or physiological obstruction of the lacrimal drainage system. These patients have severe dry eye, but would not benefit from punctual occlusion. One eye with allergic conjunctivitis had a normal Schirmer test but a fast fluorscein washout. This eye would benefit from punctual occlusion. Two eyes with initial diagnosis of allergic conjunctivitis and irritation symptoms presented normal Schirmer tests and a slow fluorescein washout by the FCT. These eyes might benefit from topical ant inflammatory treatment.

Conclusion: Decreased tear clearance was identified as an indicator of severity in patients with abnormal Schirmer test. And ire can be considered as a risk factor for chronic ocular irritation in subjects with normal Schirmer scores. This simple technique may provide new clues into the mechanism and therapy of ocular irritation. More patients and a larger follow-up are necessary to better evaluate the usefulness of this test.