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Service (sector) Cornea and External Disease N° CEP

Herpetic keratitis' findings in children and teenagers in a referral ophthalmologic center.

Authors – Cariello, A. J.; Lucca A.; Martins, E. N.; Alvarenga, L.S.; Sousa L. B.; Freitas, D. PURPOSE: To analyze the findings of herpetic keratitis in childhood in a referral service in the city of São Paulo, identifying the demographic variation, the acute phase of the disease, complications and visual acuity outcome. METHOD: Retrospective study in which patients' files were revised (Cornea Service, Ophthalmology Department, UNIFESP).

Eligibility criteria for enrollment included ages varying from zero to 18 years old, immune competence and clinical diagnosis of Herpes Simplex ocular infection. From the files were obtained information regarding age, ethnic factors, gender, origin, involved eye, visual acuity outcome, and signs and symptoms. Data underwent descriptive analysis and diagnostic classification based on the finding of the acute phase at first exam, according to Holland & Schwartz proposed nomenclature, based on the Biomicroscopy findings.

RESULTS: Between 1993 and 2002 we were able to include 22 patients in the study. The most prevalent age group was 5 to 9 years (36%). The male-female ratio was 0.37. The follow up varied from one to 30 months.

Recurrence was observed in 27% of the patients, (18% immune and 9% infectious). The right eye was affected in 55% of the patients. The most frequent referred symptoms were red eye (50%), lost of visual acuity (36%), tearing (27%), pain (22%) and photophobia (22%). Biomicroscopy signs were new vessels (36%), leukoma (32%), punctate keratitis (27%), dendritic ulcers (23%) and neurotrophic ulcers (18%). The most frequent finding during acute disease was immune stromal keratitis (50%), followed by infectious epithelial keratitis (27%). Visual acuity improvement was observed in 45% of the patients. Thirty two percent of the patients did not follow the treatment, 36% were sent for refraction or contact lens fitting, 23% were just clinically followed and 4,5% underwent corneal transplant. CONCLUSION: Immune stromal keratitis is the most frequent manifestation of herpetic keratitis in childhood in a referral service. Besides the clinical treatment visual impairment can occur, which in this particularly age can lead to amblyopia, jeopardizing visual rehabilitation.