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Eyelid make-up: a treatment for severe blepharoptosis in mitochondrial myopathy patients.

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Introduction: Mitochondrial myopathy (MM) is a hereditary disease which may present muscle weakness, progressive ophthalmoplegia and blepharoptosis. Surgical treatments such as levator muscle resection and frontalis suspension sling have been described. In patients with severe blepharoptosis, poor or absent Bell's phenomenon and frontal hypotonia, surgical treatment is not indicated due to the risk of exposure keratitis. This paper describes a conservative and reversible technique in which the patient is able to use an eyelid make-up (natural rubber latex) to elevate the upper eyelid. Patients and methods: 8 patients with biopsy confirmed MM were studied. They were evaluated by an ophthalmologist and a neurologist and pictures, as well as visual fields, were obtained previously and after the treatment. Results: All patients described a better appearance after the use of the eyelid make-up and none had allergic response to it. All cases had an increase in the palpebral fissure of at least 2 mm. The visual fields also revealed improvement in all patients. Discussion: Although frontalis suspension is the treatment of choice for patients with MM, in the most severe cases the surgery is contra-indicated because of the risk of exposure keratitis. The use of a non-toxic, reversible natural rubber latex is useful to these patients. Conclusion: This daily treatment is a simple, reversible and effective method to treat severe blepharoptosis in MM cases. It is a safe and not expensive product that can be used in these cases, as well as in patients without clinical conditions or unwilling to undergo a surgical procedure.