Editorial

Ophthalmalgia

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Eye pain is also known as ophthalmalgia. Sometimes, the terms ''ophthalgia or oculodynia'' have been also used in the meaning of the eye pain in ophthalmology and neurology. Ophthalmodynia has been especially used to define the neuralgic pain in the eye. Eye pain is a general term which defines all ocular and periorbital/orbital/retroorbital pain types and it may be caused from ophthalmic tissues including bulbus oculi, optic nerve, ocular adnexa and orbital bones, orbit and nonophthalmic tissues such as superior orbital fissure, anterior cavernous sinus, paracellar tissues, posterior cranial fossa or other intracranial structures. Eye pain may be presented in a compressive form over the eyelid in refractive errors and computer vision syndrome or behind the bulbus oculi or in deep of the orbit as experienced in sinusitis, or an inflammatory form in eyeball as occurred in inflammatory ocular diseases. On the other hand, it may be triggered or be increased with ocular movements as experienced in optic neuritis or orbital inflammatory diseases and the downward movement and deflexion of the head as seen in frontal or ethmoidal sinusitis. Additionally, the increased pain during coughing, Valsalva maneuver, bending and torsional movements in the body may be a sign of increased intracranial pressure. The ophthalmic causes of the eye pain with manifest ocular signs such eyelid edema and hyperemia, conjunctival hyperemia, chemosis, anterior chamber flare or cells, corneal edema and proptosis include chalazion and hordeolum, keratitis, corneal ulcer, acute glaucoma crisis, glaucomatocyclitic crisis, narrow-angle or neovascular glaucoma, orbital compartment syndrome, phthisis bulbi, anterior uveitis, vitritis, orbital pseudotumor and myositis, orbital thrombophlebitis, anterior scleritis, ocular tumor, phacolytic uveitis, endophthalmitis, and ocular ischemic syndrome.[1–6]

Oculodynia associated with light hypersensitivity has been defined as ''photo-oculodynia syndrome''. It is an uncommon cause of chronic eye pain syndrome without signs of ocular inflammation and damage.[7] Glaucoma shunt associated oculodynia is a newly defined cause of eyepain.[8] Recently, neuropathic ocular pain following the damage or injury to the somatosensory nervous system of the eye similar to post-herpetic neuralgia has been described. Some ocular diseases and surgeries/applications including kerato-conjunctivitis, dry eye, post-cataract surgery, post-laser/surgical kerato-refractive procedures, and contact lens wearing may cause ocular neuropathic pain.[9]

In daily practice, it may be met with some patients which describe the eye pain as the feeling of burning, cutting, sharp, needling, foreign body, pins, and needles and pounding. These sensations are often due to ocular surface diseases and corneal abrasion, corneal or subtarsal foreign body and they are included in neuropathic pain.[9]

On the other hand, to detect the cause of pain in a quiet eye (with no red or injection) may not be easy and it may be the first sign of an ophthalmologic/neuro-ophthalmologic or a non-ophthalmologic disease originated from ocular, orbital, cranial, neurologic, and vascular tissues. These pathologies include posterior uveitis, retinitis, intraocular tumors, posterior scleritis, optic neuropathies and optic neuritis, narrow-angle glaucoma, sinusitis, trigeminal neuralgia, cluster headache, migraine, posterior communicating artery aneurysm, nasopharyngeal carcinoma, Tolosa-Hunt syndrome, carotid-cavernous fistula, air-traveling, cavernous sinus inflammation/thrombosis, transient ischemic attack, cerebrovascular events, temporal arteritis and elevated intracranial pressure.[1–5] However, in some patients, the exact cause of the eye pain cannot be revealed despite all examinations and diagnostic methods and this eye pain may be called as idiopathic eye pain.

In conclusion, here, I just aimed to briefly emphasize the eye pain synonyms and its common causes.

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