Background: Oculocerebrorenal syndrome is an X-linked recessive hereditary oculocerebrorenal disorder characterized by congenital cataract, mental retardation, and Fanconi syndrome of the proximal renal tubules. Other ocular findings include glaucoma, corneal opacity (keloid), enophthalmos, and hypotonia.

Objective: To describe the treatment of 7 patients (14 eyes) with bilateral cataracts associated with oculocerebrorenal syndrome.

Method: Retrospective review.

Results: Seven patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome had visually significant bilateral cataracts detected on their first full ophthalmic examination. All underwent bilateral cataract surgery. The mean age (of 14 eyes) at cataract extraction was 1.25 (median, 1.1) months. Glaucoma diagnosis and treatment were more variable. The mean age (of 11 eyes) at glaucoma diagnosis was 24.1 (range, 0.2-70.0) months: the mean age was 0.2 month (of 4 eyes) when glaucoma was diagnosed before cataract extraction, and the mean age was 37.7 months (of 7 eyes) when glaucoma was diagnosed after cataract extraction. All eyes were followed up for a mean of 100.8 (range, 38-190) months.

Main Outcome Measure: Treatment of 7 patients (14 eyes) with bilateral cataracts associated with oculocerebrorenal syndrome.

Conclusions: Early identification and surgical removal of cataracts is recommended in patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome. Despite this, visual acuity results will only rarely be better than 20/70, and nystagmus is likely. Patients should be monitored closely and regularly for changes in intraocular pressure, optic nerve cupping, and refractive error to rule out the development of glaucoma.

Arch Ophthalmol. 2003;121:1234-1237
Seven patients (14 eyes) diagnosed as having oculocerebrorenal syndrome had bilateral cataracts detected on their first full ophthalmic examination. The cataracts were dense nuclear cataracts (3–6 mm in size). Each was considered visually significant, and surgical removal was recommended. All patients underwent bilateral cataract surgery. Miotic pupils were also noted. Glaucoma diagnosis and treatment were more variable. The data for each patient are summarized in the table.

### RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient No.</th>
<th>Eye</th>
<th>Mean Age at CE, mo</th>
<th>IOL</th>
<th>Mean Age at GD</th>
<th>IOP, mm Hg</th>
<th>No. of Medications</th>
<th>Least VA</th>
<th>GST</th>
<th>Other Surgery</th>
<th>Postoperative Follow-up, mo</th>
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<td>None</td>
<td>190</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10 mo</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>23.0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>24.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CUSM</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>CUSM</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Baerveldt implantation</td>
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<td>31.0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Baerveldt implantation</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>20/70</td>
<td>None</td>
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</table>

Abbreviations: CE, cataract extraction; CSM, central, steady, and maintained; CTX Aspir, lens cortex aspiration; CUSM, central, unsteady, and maintained; GD, glaucoma diagnosis; GST, glaucoma surgical treatment; IOL, intraocular lens; IOP, intraocular pressure; LP, light perception; NA, data not applicable; VA, visual acuity.
became phthisical. Patient 6 underwent bilateral 180° trabeculotomies 1 month after CE; they failed, necessitating a Baerveldt implant in both eyes 1 month later. He has done well, with medical treatment for the 4 years of follow-up since then. In 2 patients (patients 2 and 4), the pressure became elevated within months to a few years after the cataract diagnosis. These patients have been successfully treated medically. Patient 4 required pupilloplasty for miosis and corectopia exacerbated by echothiophate iodide (Phospholine Iodide). Of our 7 patients, 4 are African American, 2 are white, and 1 is of mixed ancestry. Patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome have bilateral cataracts that are usually deemed visually significant at or near birth. An increased IOP and global systemic developmental delay can be expected. Mechanized vitrector instrumentation is essential in the management of the congenital cataracts in these patients. Complete removal of all lens material and a primary posterior capsulotomy and an anterior vitrectomy will reduce the chances of secondary membrane formation. Cortex reproliferation required a subsequent operation in one patient (patient 5) (2 eyes), but the material aspirated easily and did not recur. Patient 1 had a secondary membrane removed in one eye at the age of 6 years, following a CE in 1985 using techniques that have since been improved.

We have treated all but one of the patients described herein by leaving the eyes aphakic after surgery, and using spectacles for optical rehabilitation. In one patient (patient 3), primary IOL implantation was performed at the age of 5 weeks, with spectacles used for residual hyperopia. This patient developed nystagmus despite this early optical correction. A longer follow-up will be needed to determine if IOL implantation is useful in patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome. This patient has recently developed IOPs in the mid 20s and is being treated medically. Glaucoma, common in these patients, can cause marked axial length changes, which would make primary IOL power selection difficult.

Despite early identification and surgical treatment, 5 patients (patients 1-4 and 7) developed nystagmus. In a previous study, researchers stated that the best visual acuity that can be expected is in the range of 20/100. However, the means by which this number was formulated are not stated. In our series, only 3 patients had a mental status that was amenable to obtaining the Snellen letter visual acuity. One patient (patient 5) had a visual acuity of 20/40 OD (no nystagmus) and light perception in the fellow eye, while another patient (patient 7) had visual acuities of 20/60 OD and 20/70 OS (with nystagmus). Patient 4 had a visual acuity of 20/80 OU, and demonstrated no fixation preference.

It seems that even with early surgery and early optical replacement of the crystalline lens, the visual acuity is not likely to be normal in these patients, and nystagmus usually develops. The nystagmus was not noted at birth in these patients. It was recorded as a sensory nystagmus from poor visual development. After repeated review of the medical records, no predictive factor for poor visual development or acuity could be rec-

To our knowledge, this is the first series that documents the surgical results of congenital cataract associated with oculocerebrorenal syndrome. In our series of 14 eyes, 12 did not undergo IOL implantation during cataract surgery, while 2 did undergo IOL placement (patient 3). The mean age at CE was 1.25 months.

Patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome are often thought to exhibit typical facial appearances that include frontal bossing, deep-set eyes, chubby cheeks, a fair complexion, and blond hair (Figure). Of our 7 patients, 4 are African American, 2 are white, and 1 is of mixed ancestry. Patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome have bilateral cataracts that are usually deemed visually significant at or near birth. An increased IOP and global systemic developmental delay can be expected. Mechanized vitrector instrumentation is essential in the management of the congenital cataracts in these patients. Complete removal of all lens material and a primary posterior capsulotomy and an anterior vitrectomy will reduce the chances of secondary membrane formation. Cortex reproliferation required a subsequent operation in one patient (patient 5) (2 eyes), but the material aspirated easily and did not recur. Patient 1 had a secondary membrane removed in one eye at the age of 6 years, following a CE in 1985 using techniques that have since been improved.

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Patient 4 (aged 8 years) demonstrates the typical facies of oculocerebrorenal syndrome.
The mean IOP of these eyes at last follow-up was 17.7 (range, 14-25) mm Hg, with a mean of 2.2 medications (range, 0-3 medications). Only one of our patients (patient 7) has not required medical or surgical treatment of the IOP. Both eyes of patient 5 underwent cyclocryotherapy to assist with pressure management. Both eyes of patient 6 underwent a 180° trabeculotomy, with subsequent Baerveldt seton placement. Because of the few patients and the variable ages at which glaucoma was diagnosed in our series, we were unable to assess a safe age or elapsed time after which glaucoma risk would be minimized. As is generally true in pediatric glaucoma treatment, those patients who were diagnosed as having the disease within the first few weeks of life required surgery, while those diagnosed as having the disease later were better able to be treated medically.

In conclusion, early identification and surgical removal of cataracts in patients with oculocerebrorenal syndrome is recommended. Despite this, the visual acuity is not expected to be better than 20/70 and nystagmus is likely, even with early surgical removal of the cataracts and prompt optical correction. Intraocular lens implantation at CE can be performed safely, but the lack of eye growth predictability in these infants with glaucoma makes power selection difficult. Patients with or without IOL placement should be monitored closely for changes in IOP, optic nerve cupping, and refractive error, so that glaucoma can be detected and treated promptly.

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REFERENCES


From the Archives of the Archives

Jamaica-Ginger Drinkers’ Amblyopia

Since 1897, a number of cases of amblyopia from the use of extract of Jamaica ginger have been reported in medical journals, two of which having appeared within the last month. In all cases the cause of the symptoms has been credited to the ginger constituent, and some speculation has been indulged in as to how it could produce the retrobulbar neuritis or whatever other lesion was assumed to be its underlying pathologic condition. Aside from these observations, there is no evidence of any such special toxic action of ginger. It may, if taken in excess, be irritating to the stomach or throat, but it has otherwise no record to place it among the active poisons to the nervous system. This fact has been one of the puzzles to the reporters of these cases. Alcohol in excess, especially with tobacco, can cause the symptom, but the ginger-essence drinkers do not appear to have imbibed enough alcohol to thus account for it; at least it was not so credited. Now, however, there comes a report from Baltimore that certain manufacturers or wholesale druggists have been putting out on the public an essence of ginger the alcoholic constituent of which is methyl alcohol, or possibly what is called methylated spirit, instead of the more expensive ethyl alcohol, a substance which Casey A. Wood2 and others have shown to be quite capable of producing amblyopia, not merely when ingested internally, but also when inhaled or otherwise absorbed in its concentrated form. This, if true, and it is said that the accusation is backed by the Medico-Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, will go far to account for the misfortunes of the ginger-essence-topers who are said to exist in large numbers in the dry towns of Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The way of the transgressor whose appetite for alcohol leads him to indulge in drug substitutes is hard in many ways, and this is only one of them. It is likely, moreover, that the transgressing druggists may also find themselves embarrassed with damage suits and a more or less dilapidated reputation.

1. Merck’s Archives, January.
2. JOUR A. M. A. xxxiii, p. 1653