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Sympathetic ophthalmia as a major sight-threatening disorder

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SO (sympathetic ophthalmia) is iris and eyeball inflammatory condition affecting both eyes that occurs after a penetrating injury as a delayed autoimmune reaction to eye injury. Patients present with pain, photophobia, and paresis of accommodation, metamorphopsia and mild to significant visual loss. The granulomatous anterior uveitis is accompanied by posterior segment findings including moderate to severe vitritis, choroiditis, papillitis, perivasculitis, and yellow-white lesions of the retinal pigment epithelium (Dalen-Fuchs nodules). The inflammation can lead to serious retinal detachment and macular edema. Extraocular symptoms include headache, meningitis or cerebrospinal fluid pleocytosis, hearing loss, poliosis and vitiligo. The inflammation is caused by a cell-mediated immune mechanism and autoimmune inflammatory response directed against ocular self-antigens released after the initial injury. SO may occur after ocular trauma (47 to 65% of patients) or contusions. Wounds involving the ciliary body are associated with the highest risk. Surgical interventions may also trigger SO, with posterior segment surgery carrying a higher risk than anterior segment surgery. Diagnosis of SO is mainly based on patient history and clinical presentation. Imaging studies (fluorescein or indocyanine green angiography, B-scan ultrasonography and optical coherence tomography) may be useful to confirm the diagnosis.

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