Yoga in the form of breathing exercises: a bane for some

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DESCRIPTION

A 28-year-old man presented with painless defective vision in the left eye of 4-day duration. He gave a history of performing yoga in the form of breathing exercises prior to this. There were no other ocular/systemic problems. On examination, vision in the right eye was 6/6. Anterior segment/fundus was normal. His vision in the left eye was 2/60, not improving with pinhole. The anterior segment was normal. Fundus examination revealed a large subhyaloid haemorrhage involving the macula (figure 1). His systemic examination was normal. Blood pressure, full blood count, coagulation profile and blood sugars were normal. A diagnosis of valsalva retinopathy was made. The patient was subjected to argon green laser hyaloidotomy, with power 200 mw; spot size 50; duration 200 ms. There was

Figure 1 Fundus picture of the left eye showing large premacular subhyaloid haemorrhage.

Figure 2 Fundus picture showing drainage of blood into the vitreous immediately following YAG laser hyaloidotomy.

Figure 3 Fundus picture taken 45 min after laser hyaloidotomy.

rapid resolution of a premacular, subhyaloid haemorrhage with restoration of visual function (figures 2–5). Valsalva retinopathy develops when a rise in intrathoracic, abdominal pressure is transmitted to the eye that causes a sudden increase in the intraocular venous pressure, ruptures the superficial retinal capillaries.¹ A subhyaloid/preretinal haemorrhage is a collection of blood between the internal limiting membrane of the retina and the posterior hyaloid phase. It often occurs in healthy young adults as a result of heavy lifting, straining, vomiting, pregnancy and bleeding disorders. Cases

Figure 4 Fundus picture taken 24 h after laser hyaloidotomy.

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Figure 5 Fundus picture showing complete resolution of the haemorrhage.

following yoga have not been reported so far. Haemorrhage in the macula normally resolves over a period of 3 months.² When dislodged with the help of laser, it gets absorbed faster than when left alone.³ Possible complications of YAG laser hyaloidotomy include inadvertent damage to the macula, epiretinal membrane formation, internal limiting membrane wrinkling, macular hole formation and retinal detachment.¹

Learning points

- ▶ Valsalva retinopathy is a unilateral or bilateral condition that occurs when increased intrathoracic or intra-abdominal pressure transmitted to the eye following coughing and straining. Cases following yoga therapy have not been reported frequently.
- ▶ Some patients may develop a poor visual outcome due to the presumed toxic effects of blood on the retinal pigment epithelium and/or epiretinal membrane formation.
- ▶ Nd:YAG laser hyaloidotomy is a safe and effective procedure. It achieves rapid resolution of premacular subhyaloid haemorrhage with restoration of visual function, preventing the need for vitreoretinal surgery.

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