



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

ACUPUNCTURE TO TREAT AMBLYOPIA

Acupuncture was more effective in treating anisometric amblyopia also known as "lazy eye" in children when compared to the standard treatment of wearing an eye patch according to a study reported by Dr. Dennis Lam in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*. Because these children have significantly different prescriptions in each eye, one of the eyes does not see clearly and fails to develop good vision and have what is called amblyopia. **"According to the National Eye Institute amblyopia affects approximately 3% of US children. If not successfully corrected in early childhood the problem can persist into adulthood - it is the most common cause of visual impairment in one eye among children and young and middle aged adults"** according to Medpage Today. Children with this condition from ages 3-7 respond well to wearing an eye patch several hours a day and exercising the weak eye. Those from 7-11 do not do well with the patching regimen for many reasons. This study divided 88 children from the ages of 7-12 into two groups. Both groups were given proper glasses to correct their refractive errors and groups were given proper glasses to correct their refractive errors and did one hour a day of near-vision activities. Group 1 had their stronger eye patched for two hours a day to make the child use the weaker eye and thus strengthen it; Group 2 group receive 5 sessions of acupuncture per week. **After 15 weeks 3/4 of the acupuncture patients had improved vs. 2/3 of the patched patients and the improvement of vision was better in the acupuncture group.** While this is a single study and more work needs to be done, it does open the door to further research into ways to treat this very important eye condition.

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