Dietary supplementation and glaucoma

The Science behind the Tip

Dietary supplements belong to the broad group of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). A recent survey in Canada has found that 1 in 9 glaucoma patients was using CAM. Most of them were using herbal medicines (34.5%), dietary modifications (22.7%) or dietary supplements (18.8%)\(^1\). Based on the fact that some glaucoma patients continue to progress at low IOPs, a wide space is left for hypotheses, preclinical experiments, clinical trials and speculations! There is a rationale to consider that dietary supplementation could help in glaucoma. For instance oxidative stress is well established in glaucoma and combat that stress makes sense\(^2\). Another example is the ability of the omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) to decrease IOP in rats\(^3\).

Unfortunately there is not robust interventional dietary supplementation study demonstrating the positive effect of such a treatment in glaucoma patients. Conversely there is evidence that some of these compounds may arm, such as an increase intake of magnesium which was found associated with a higher incidence of glaucoma\(^4\).

Several observational studies have pointed out a reduced risk for glaucoma for higher fruits and vegetables intake\(^5\) or higher omega 3 PUFAs consumption in selected populations\(^6\). However additional prospective studies are mandatory before glaucoma specialists can recommend any valid dietary supplementation.

References


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