



An optic disc haemorrhage indicates ongoing structural change and is an important sign of progressive glaucoma

The Science behind the Tip

Prospective studies have shown that splinter-shaped haemorrhages at the optic disc margin are an important risk factor for progression of glaucoma¹. They are present for 4 to 8 weeks before they resorb and can be easily missed if magnification is not used to examine the disc. Importantly, stereophotographs are significantly more sensitive at detecting optic disc haemorrhages than clinical examination².

Disc haemorrhages are a marker for higher susceptibility to glaucoma progression, but are unlikely to be in the causal pathway³. They are not only a strong predictor of future visual field progression, but they also indicate a faster rate of retinal ganglion cell loss^{3,4}. Lowering of the intraocular pressure has been shown to slow further visual field loss after a disc haemorrhage⁵.

References

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- 4) De Moraes CG, Prata TS, Liebmann CA et al. Spatially consistent localized visual field loss before and after disc hemorrhage. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci* 2009; 50: 4727-4733
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