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A Study on the Prevalence of Adverse Ocular Manifestations in Pediatric Patients Receiving Ethambutol in the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program at East Avenue Medical Center and District II Health Centers in Quezon City

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Tuberculosis is one of the most important systemic infections throughout the world. Ethambutol has been used to treat tuberculosis since the 1960s, but the related visual impairment was recognized soon after its introduction. Objective of the study is to determine the prevalence of adverse ocular manifestations after taking Ethambutol as part of the treatment regimen of children with Tuberculosis. This is a cross – sectional analytical study. Patients aged 3 – 18 years old enrolled for treatment of tuberculosis at the TB DOTS facility of East Avenue Medical Center and District II Health Centers in Quezon City were included in the study. Patients without prior diagnosis of any ophthalmologic problems and without history of previous ophthalmologic signs and symptoms were included. Pertinent demographic factors, personal and medical history of patients were obtained. Visual acuity by Snellen chart, color vision by the Ishihara Chart, direct fundoscopic examination, and anterior segment slit-lamp biomicroscopy were performed. Statistical analysis used were Mann Whitney U Test, Yates' chi-square test, Fisher's Exact test, Chi-square test. Statistical significance was based on p-values ≤ 0.05 . Results: 93 out of 101 patients had no ocular manifestations, however, 8 (7.9%) of the subjects had ophthalmologic findings; 1 had red-green color vision defect, 6 with error of refraction, and 1 had blurring of superior disc margin in both eyes with red-green color vision defect. There was no significant relationship on the dosage and duration of the drug to the manifestation of optic symptoms of the patients. Study showed that there was no significant ophthalmologic effect on children taking ethambutol provided that the drug will be given within the recommended dose and duration. Patients however, should be monitored for any visual manifestations during treatment.

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