Eyelid Irritation

Eyelid irritation can have many causes and is involved in many other ocular conditions. External irritation can be due to blepharitis (see blepharitis), contact dermatitis, or hordeola\(^2\) (See hordeolum). This section will examine papillary and follicular conjunctivitis.

**Papillary Conjunctivitis**

This is associated with an allergic immune response, eg vernal keratoconjunctivitis, or a response to a foreign body such as a contact lens or ocular prosthesis\(^1\). It is more commonly associated with soft lenses than gas permeable lenses, and can be due to thick or poorly designed or manufactured lens edges\(^3\).

The patient will complain of itching, irritation and mucus discharge, and if he is a contact lens wearer, he may experience reduced comfort and excess lens movement, along with visual blur. Papillary conjunctivitis is almost always bilateral, and tends to affect only the upper tarsal conjunctiva, which exhibits papillae and hyperaemia. Stringy mucus may be found in the tear film, and decreasing comfort may cause the patient to eventually cease lens wear\(^3\).

**Treatment**

If the condition is caused by a foreign body response due to a contact lens or ocular prosthesis, then the patient should be refitted with a lens of improved design / fit / material, and the compliance with cleaning the lens or prosthesis should be carefully checked. A more frequent replacement regime may be the answer, and possibly the use of anti-histamines or mast cell stabilisers may be necessary\(^3\).

**Follicular Conjunctivitis**

This may be caused by a variety of conditions, including inflammation due to pathogens such as viruses, atypical bacteria and toxins, including topical medication\(^4\). Many symptoms are shared with other forms of conjunctivitis, and in this instance follicles will be found on the tarsal conjunctiva.

**Papillae vs Follicles**

Papillae are raised areas of inflammation with a central blood vessel, appearing red at the surface and paler at the base. Follicles are an accumulation of white blood cells without a central vessel, and appear pale at the surface and redder at the base\(^3\).

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References

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