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CHARACTERIZATION OF RETINAL LESIONS IN CHILDREN WITH CONGENITAL ZIKA SYNDROME

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PURPOSE: To evaluate and characterize the specific retinal lesions in children with microcephaly and presumed Congenital Zika Syndrome (CZS). To analyze the changes over time of the retinal lesions and their consequences to visual function. METHODS: A clinical prospective study with comprehensive ophthalmologic evaluation in patients born with microcephaly and CZS took place at CAVIVER Institute. Visual acuity was obtained with appropriate tests for children (Teller acuity test). Retinal evaluation was performed every 4 months. Digital eye fundus imaging of the affected eye was provided for data analysis. Neurological and clinical data were obtained. RESULTS: Seventy-two children with CZS were evaluated. Characterization of the retinal anomalies (26%)(chorioretinal atrophy, optic nerve anomalies and mottled retinal pigment) and their progression or regression were studied. During the mean follow up (mean= 20 months) in this preliminary study, there were no new chorioretinal lesions. No regression of the preexisting lesions was observed. Strabismus (61%) and nystagmus (40%) occurred in a large number of individuals. Visual acuity results were below normal range in all subjects. CONCLUSIONS: Unique macular circumscribed chorioretinal atrophy was observed in patients with CZS. The characterization of this chorioretinal atrophy and its association with clinical and neurological aspects are under investigation. Ophthalmological protocols with clinical recommendations and special visual training methods could provide a better quality of life for those children with visual impairment. Financial Disclosure: *Funding for this research was supported by the Global Ophthalmology Awards Program (GOAP), a Bayer-sponsored initiative committed to supporting ophthalmic research across the world.*