Assessment of visual function in children with multiple disabilities

Two cases studies of children with cerebral palsy

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There is no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this presentation
Purpose

- **Multiply handicapped children** have a high incidence of disorders affecting the visual system.

- Assessment and management of visual disorders in this group of children presents a complex challenge.

- This study describes the results of **visual function assessment** in two children with neurological disability over a one-year period.
Methods

- The study was conducted in two clinics in Portugal: Topcare Clinic and Portuguese Retinopathy Association.

- After ophthalmologic examination Children underwent an orthoptic evaluation:
  - Visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, confrontation visual field, chromatic vision, cover test, Hirschberg, Krimsky, ocular movements (saccadic and pursuit) and ocular coordination.
### Case 1

**Age:** 10 months  
**Sex:** female  
**Diagnosis:** cerebral palsy

This child had sensory and movement disorders, such as muscle spasticity or rigidity, random movements and lack of balance.

### Case 2

**Age:** 8 years  
**Sex:** female  
**Diagnosis:** neurological visual loss
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Motor evaluation</th>
<th>Binocular visual acuity</th>
<th>Binocular Contrast sensitivity</th>
<th>Confrontation visual field</th>
<th>Eye-hand coordination</th>
<th>Chromatic vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hirschberg/Krimsky Alternant exotropia of 30º</td>
<td>Lea Gratting paddles At 86 cm was 12 cpd</td>
<td>Lea Hiding Heidi Low Contrast test At 1 m was 10%</td>
<td>Contraction of the lower hemifield (binocular assessment)</td>
<td>Anomalous</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prismatic cover test/ocular movements Infantile right esotropia of 45PD (near and distance) Latent/manifest nystagmus with head tilted position Null point in down gaze and convergence</td>
<td>Sloan Letters chart At 5.80 m was: RE=0.063 LE=0.4 OU=0.2 in primary gaze position and 0.5 with the head tilted position</td>
<td>Sloan Letters Low Contrast test At 5.80 m was 1.6%</td>
<td>Normal (monocular assessment)</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

- Children needed modifications in the examination techniques to assess visual dysfunction, specially tests standard distances.

- The use of head position it’s of extreme value to support the best functional use of vision.

- Models of assessment provide appropriate feedback and explanation to parents, carers and educational professionals.

- Rehabilitation methods need to be tailor made as each child could have it’s unique visual and motor deficit.