

Original article

Topical Anesthetic Misuse in Patients Admitted to Sabzevar Eye Clinic in Iran

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SUMMARY

Topical anesthetic eye drops are used extensively for ophthalmic examinations but self-treatment and non-technical removal of foreign bodies using tetracaine drops can be hazardous. The present study intended to determine the inadmissible uses of anesthetic tetracaine eye drops, manner of drug obtaining and likelihood of the ocular complications in the patients.

This cross-sectional study was conducted on 162 patients with ocular pain and foreign body sensation, red eye or lid edema admitted to the Eye clinic in Sabzevar, Iran. Variables included age, sex, chief complaint, job, site of foreign bodies, diagnosis of problem, use of tetracaine drops, drug provision, times patients referred to the eye clinic, and kinds of treatment.

The most common chief complaint for admission to the Eye clinic was lacrimation (55.6%), followed by ocular pain, and foreign body sensation (35.8%). Some patients (30.9%) (mostly welders) inadmissibly used topical tetracaine eye drops; 21.6% of cases obtained tetracaine eye drops from drugstores without doctor's prescription, and only 3.7% provided drugs by prescription. Corneal site (81.5%) was the most common location of foreign body; metallic foreign body (63%) was the most common. One patient was admitted in hospital for management.

Topical inadmissible tetracaine (0.5%) is commonly used by welders, who obtain it from drugstores without prescriptions due to its simple usage and short acting pain relief. Supervision is required over drugstores for denying it if demanded without a prescription. Enhancing clients' awareness is also suggested.

Key words: tetracaine, drug misuse, foreign body, eye drop

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