effects. Redness and edema of the eyelids, or mild elevation of body temperature are commonly encountered. The involvement of central nervous system, following a single topical application of 1% atropine sulphate ointment, is a very rare occurrence. We are reporting one such case.

Case Report

A 3-month-old male infant, weighing 2.5 kg was hospitalized with sudden abdominal distension, restlessness, abnormal movements, breathing difficulty, irritability, excessive crying, and refusal of feeds of one hour duration. He was born to a 2nd gravida mother, at 30 weeks of gestation and weighed 1000 g. He had septicemia with stage II necrotizing enterocolitis and Stage II retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). The child was on regular follow up. To reassess the progression of ROP, 1% atropine sulphate ointment was applied 1½ h prior to the onset of the presenting symptoms (approximate quantity 0.25 mg/kg of atropine sulphate).

At admission, he was drowsy, febrile and cyanosed. He had tachypnea, respiratory rate (72/min), tachycardia (heart rate 180/min), hot and flushed extremities and fixed dilated pupils. He continued to have generalized tonic clonic convulsions. His abdomen was distended, bladder palpable and bowel sounds absent. Blood counts, ESR and urine examination were normal. Blood culture was sterile and ECG showed sinus tachycardia.

With the above history and temporal relationship to application of atropine ointment, a diagnosis of atropine toxicity was made.

His symptoms were controlled with an intravenous administration of 0.12 mg of neostigmine (physostigmine was not

An Unusual Case of Atropine Toxicity

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The use of cycloplegic agents in children may occasionally lead to mild side

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Received for publication September 11, 1990; Accepted February 4, 1991
The convulsions were controlled with IV diazepam. Within a few minutes of IV administration of neostigmine, his pulse rate dropped to 130/min and he passed urine. Pupils remained dilated and fixed. A repeat dose was administered after 8 as his symptoms recurred. By 18, his general condition stabilized and pupils become sluggishly reactive but remained dilated. After 48 h of hospital stay and confirming nonprogressive stage II ROP, he was discharged. The child is now 6 months old and doing well with normal vision and development.

Discussion

Unusual sensitivity to therapeutic doses of atropine is rarely encountered. Factors predisposing to increasing sensitivity include Down's Syndrome, hot and humid climate, children less than one year, paralytic ileus and bronchial asthma. Atropine Sulphate intoxication leading to convulsions and coma have been reported with doses of 0.09 mg/kg and death has resulted from a dose as low as 0.2 mg/kg. (1) Atropine toxicity from oral administration of atropine methonitrate (Eumydin) drops (2) and as a result of use of homatropine and atropine sulphate drops and ointment (3) has been reported. Following ophthalmic application, absorption may occur through conjunctival sac or following swallowing of drops after it tracks down through the nasolacrimal duct. (3) The treatment is symptomatic and physostigmine may be used in doses of 0.5 mg to a maximum of 2 mg (1, 2).

In our case, atropine toxicity resulted from a dose of 0.25 mg/kg but recovered completely. With improving neonatal care, ophthalmic examination for detecting retinopathy is being more frequently done in India. We feel that atropine preparations should be used with caution especially in premature infants.

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The diagnosis of hydatid disease is often not considered in children, particularly in nonendemic areas. The initial diagnosis

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Received for publication October 26, 1990; Accepted February 4, 1991