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Amblyopia in Asian American School Children

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Abstract

Background

Amblyopia is a condition of reduced visual acuity not correctable by refractive means and not attributable to obvious structural or pathological ocular anomalies. It has been estimated that between 2 to 2.5% of the general population manifests some degree of functional amblyopia. It is the leading cause of monocular vision loss.

Purpose

To screen for amblyopia in pre-school children in San Francisco Chinese American communities.

Method

Vision screenings of children 3-6 years of age were performed by 15 pediatricians in 9 offices in 1996. Potential amblyopia was identified by one of the 4 criteria:

1. Vision less than 20/40 in one eye for 3 year old.
2. Vision less than 20/30 in one eye for 4-6 year old.
3. Disparity of one or more lines between the two eyes.
4. Strabismus.

These potential amblyopic children were evaluated further by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. The level of examination was determined by the needs of the individual child, ranging from repeated vision examinations to comprehensive cycloplegic eye exam and even visual field tests.

Result

30 children were identified by pediatricians to have possible amblyopia. 5 (16%) were confirmed to be amblyopic.

Conclusion

The involvement of pediatricians to screen for amblyopia in pre-school children is a highly effective practice.