

DEFINITION

1. **Retinal vein occlusion** is a condition in which either the main central retinal vein or a branch of this vein is blocked by thrombosis, thereby obstructing the drainage of blood from the retina.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

2. In **central retinal vein occlusion** all the retinal veins become enormously engorged and extremely tortuous and the retina is covered with haemorrhages. Sight is much impaired and, in many cases, bunches of tortuous new blood vessels develop on the retina forming a collateral circulation. Eventually the retina becomes atrophic with fine pigmentary changes. As a result of these vascular changes the intra-ocular pressure rises in a considerable number of cases, causing a secondary glaucoma and making the prognosis worse.
3. In **branch retinal vein thrombosis** the above noted retinal changes are limited to the area supplied by the vein. The prognosis for central vision is better, but this may still be affected by blockage of certain branches of the retinal veins. Secondary glaucoma is rare in branch vein occlusion.

AETIOLOGY

4. Retinal vein occlusion usually occurs in elderly people with atherosclerotic disease. In these cases, the obstruction is usually in the central vein where it shares a common sheath with the retinal artery so that the two are affected by the same atherosclerotic process. The block may, however, be in a branch retinal vein where a sclerosed artery crosses it.
5. Retinal vein occlusion may be secondary to local causes such as -
 - 5.1. facial erysipelas
 - 5.2. orbital cellulitis
 - 5.3. an infective periphlebitis (Eale's disease)
6. The aetiology in all forms is that of the underlying condition.

CONCLUSION

7. Retinal vein occlusion is a condition of thrombosis of a retinal vein as a consequence of atherosclerosis or a local infective process.

REFERENCES

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