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Chronic Anterior Uveitis in Children: Psychosocial Challenges for Patients and Their Families

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** To describe issues of concern to children with chronic anterior uveitis; to consider the psychological impact of chronic anterior uveitis on children's lives; and to understand the effect of a child's chronic illness on other family members.

**Design:** Expert commentary.

**Methods:** Author experiences were supplemented by a review of pertinent medical literature and by consideration of content from semi-structured, separate patient and parent interviews.

**Results:** Vision loss and the fear of blindness are not the only stressors for children with chronic anterior uveitis and their families; of additional concern are the burdens of examinations and treatment regimens, as well as drug toxicities. Children with chronic anterior uveitis experience medical, academic, interpersonal, psychological, and developmental challenges. The impact of disease extends to other members of a patient's family as well; parents experience challenges in similar domains. Problems with adherence to medical regimens are common. Both the disease and its treatment affect quality of life, and can interfere with successful management of disease and transition to autonomy in adulthood, as reported for other chronic conditions. Coping processes vary greatly between different families.

**Conclusions:** Eye examinations and the rigors of long-term treatment often influence the psychosocial health of patients and families; physicians who are aware of these issues can help patients and families cope with chronic illness and may improve outcomes. Further psychosocial research to understand the experiences of children dealing with chronic anterior uveitis is warranted; this commentary can serve as a foundation for development of age- and disease-specific research questions.

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