Leber's Congenital Amaurosis

What is Leber's Congenital Amaurosis?

Leber's Congenital Amaurosis (LCA) is an inherited eye condition, which appears at birth or in the first few months of life. It is a degenerative disease (progresses over time) that is thought to be caused by abnormal development of the light-sensitive cells in the retina, which usually results in very reduced vision or blindness.

Children with LCA often have roving eye movements. They may also press on their eyes to try and get some visual stimulation such as flashes. Eye pressing can cause damage to areas surrounding the eyes and the eyes themselves often resulting in sunken or deep-set eyes. Eye pressing should be discouraged from an early age – see your therapist for ideas.

How does it affect vision?

Vision loss caused by LCA can vary between children so that they may have low vision or may be completely blind.

Who is most at risk?

LCA is a genetic condition, and genetic counselling is recommended.

How can it be treated?

There is currently no treatment available for LCA. Children with LCA can be taught to learn the best ways to use any remaining vision or how to learn to perform daily activities without vision.

How does it progress with age?

Children with very little vision may become long-sighted as they get older (cannot see things close-up). Glasses are unlikely to help, unless the child is short or long sighted in addition to having LCA.

Children may also develop other eye problems such as cataracts and turning of the eye.

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