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50 Years Ago in *The Journal of Pediatrics*

Light Exposure to the Immature Eye

Sisson TRC, Glauser EM, Kuwabara T. Retinal changes produced by phototherapy. J Pediatr 1970;77:221-7.

The first indications that nonthermal retinal damage might exist were presented by Vos in 1962.[1] A few years later, in *The Journal*, Sisson et al published a study in which they examined the effects of phototherapy with blue fluorescent light on the retinas of newborn piglets to assess possible effects of phototherapy on the eyes of newborn infants. The use of phototherapy was first published by Cremer in 1958[2] and became more commonly used in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sisson et al examined the eyes 3 weeks after the piglets had been exposed to phototherapy for 72 hours, and also 1 eye that was only exposed for 12 hours, and found extensive retinal damage, which supported the hypothesis that eyes should be shielded during phototherapy. This and other studies stimulated Glass and Avery 15 years later to examine whether bright light in the nursery may contribute to retinopathy of prematurity.[3] They recommended to shield the eye from bright light but also warned that prolonged occlusive patching of the eye would produce visual deprivation and should be avoided. In 1998 Reynolds et al showed that light reduction did not prevent retinopathy of prematurity.[4] Sisson et al and other studies contributed to present practice of shielding the eye of infants born premature undergoing phototherapy and thus still have an impact on how we treat these infants.

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