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CORRESPONDENCE

Staging systems for visual field damage classification in glaucoma

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To the Editor:

I read the article entitled "Comparison of perimetric glaucoma staging systems in Asians with primary glaucoma" by Hoang et al. [1] with great interest. I have been dealing with this topic for almost 30 years and I am very pleased that my Glaucoma Staging System 2 (or eGSS) was evaluated in this fine study. I have some concerns, however, regarding a few issues raised in the study.

First of all, it is debatable to only use the AGIS method as the gold standard for judging the performances of other more modern staging systems. The fact that the distribution of glaucoma severity using the HPA and Hirasawa systems was almost identical does not automatically means that the latter system is better than the eGSS. In other studies [2–4], additional criteria were used, which gave rise to different results. The percentage of agreement found between stereophotograph and classification outcomes were greatest with eGSS when compared to other methods. Moreover, the agreement between AGIS and eGSS was substantial [4].

In the "Discussion" section, the authors state that eGSS completely relies on MD and PSD; thus, cataract, aging changes, and artefacts could influence the staging results. This is true for cataract (in which the defects tend to be of a generalized type, differently from those related to glaucoma), and for artefacts (this problem, however, affects all the classification systems), but not for changes due to aging, considering that the MD index is age-corrected.

Another statement that needs to be toned down is that the eGSS "could not differentiate between a normal and abnormal field". No study proves this claim.

In conclusion, the mGSS by Hirasawa et al. is surely an intelligent and easy method for categorizing the visual field damage in glaucoma. However, differently from the eGSS, which works with all types of perimeters available on the market, the method by Hirasawa et al. can only be used with last generation Humphrey machines (series 7 and 8), in which the VFI is available. This may be a big limit especially in some countries and small rural clinics that only have access to older perimeters or machines by Octopus.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest PB is the inventor of the Glaucoma Staging System, but he has no conflict of interest in this article.

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