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Treatments for Irlen Syndrome: A case report

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Introduction & Aim: Irlen Syndrome is not an optical or visual acuity problem, but is a perceptual processing dysfunction that might lead to reading difficulties, poor handwriting, poor depth perception light sensitivity, academic underachievement or even headaches, migraines and fatigue. This case report aimed to prescribe progressive optometric treatments for a clinical case of Irlen Syndrome. Resulting improvement in reading efficiency for this instance was also presented.

Case Report: Diego, a ten-year-old student, was noticed exotropia when watching TV at five of age. However, Diego did not express any visual discomfort until he was a fourth grade as his reading requirement increased. He experienced reading difficulties and was then referred to dyslexia identification. Except refractive errors, the optometrist indicated that Diego had EOM, accommodation problem, combining with Intermittent Alt-XT at D and N; the experienced optometrist prescribed eye frame, filter, single aperture rule vision therapy and typescope or ruler for Diego. The first step was to prescribe refractive correction and prisms (OD: -1.75DS, 0.5Δ BI; OS: -2.00DS, 0.5Δ BI). The second step was to apply a filter intervention (orange) and followed with single aperture rule vision therapy for 30 minutes every day. Finally, a typescope or ruler was employed for reading. Diego mentioned that the phenomena of word floating and partial disappearance of words were ameliorated. Also, his EOM check results showed significant improvements in eye jitter and overshoot. Consequently, his attentiveness and reading efficiency increased due to alleviation of eye fatigue.

Discussion: Refractive correction and prism addition could apply better convergence and fixation. Once treated with the appropriate refractive correction, prism and Irlen filter glasses, Diego gained several positive treatment effects including enhancement in optical focus, lessening in photophobia and eye fatigue, decrease in skipping words or missing lines and improvement in reading perseverance and efficiency. These observed effects were encouraging and indicated that the treatments employed for the current case could be applicable for future large-scale clinical studies. Meanwhile, the same treatment mode as in Diego's instance is recommended for ADD or ADHD cases in improving their attentiveness and reading ability as well as moderating their dependence on medicines.

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