

Study links CRAO, cardiovascular risk factors

Researchers have found that central retinal artery occlusion (CRAO) indicates cardiovascular risk factors at higher rates than originally believed.

To better understand cardiovascular risk factors in CRAO patients, a group of German researchers examined data from the European Assessment Group for Lysis in the Eye (EAGLE) study, which included standardized medical and neurologic examinations. The study included 77 patients, 54 men and 23 women, who had a mean age of 62.2 years. All study participants were required to answer a standardized questionnaire regarding their medical history and to undergo both physical and neurologic examinations.

Cardiovascular risk factors or events were newly diagnosed in 78% of study participants. Among these, the most frequently discovered risk factor was ipsilateral carotid artery stenosis, which was present in 40% of the participants, compared to 4.1% in the general population. Carotid ultrasound was the most relevant diagnostic procedure in CRAO patients.

"Although there are limited means to treat the eye after acute non-arteritic CRAO, it is important to work in close cooperation with the primary physician and colleagues from internal medicine and neurology to check every CRAO patient for cardiovascular risk factors," said study coauthor **Nicolas Feltgen, MD**, Georg-August University, Goettingen, Germany. "Acute loss of vision due to CRAO or partial retinal arterial occlusions or amaurosis fugax should be treated as promptly as patients with ischemic stroke to identify cardiovascular risk factors and prevent stroke in the population at risk."