Prophylactic Brimonidine Before LASIK

To the Editor:

RA Norden, in his article entitled "Effect of Prophylactic Brimonidine on Bleeding Complications and Flap Adherence After Laser in situ Keratomileusis" (*J Refract Surg* 2002;18:468-471), reported that brimonidine administered before LASIK may significantly reduce subconjunctival hemorrhage and reduce hyperemia. We agree that brimonidine can be considered a strong vasoconstrictor based on alpha-2-adrenergic agonist activity. Prophylactic use of brimonidine would have an effect on bleeding complications not only after LASIK, but also other anterior segment surgical procedures. However, allergic reactions are reported more frequently with brimonidine.[1,2] Allergy was seen in up to 25.7% of patients treated with brimonidine.[3]

In a prospective study with a similar design, we evaluated the effect of brimonidine on bleeding complications during and after non-penetrating glaucoma surgery. In three of the first ten study patients, the use of prophylactic brimonidine caused an allergic reaction. The resulting hyperemia was so severe that we had to postpone surgery. Subsequently, we test the sensitivity of patients to brimonidine a few weeks before surgery.

Although Norden did not report any cases of brimonidine-related allergy, we believe that using a simple sensitivity test enables us to foresee this relatively common complication and take the necessary precautions.

REFERENCES

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