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Congenital cataract as a cause of visual impairment

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Congenital cataract is no longer a major cause of visual impairment in children. However, it becomes more and more important in case of complex and genetic diseases because it can help us in obtaining the genetic diagnosis in these diseases. Different forms of congenital cataract have different causes and can be related to for instance metabolic disease or developmental anomalies of the eye. In multiple impaired children other more predominating physical impairments can cause a delay in the detection of disorders of the eye such as cataract. Epidemiological characteristics of the population of visually impaired children will be presented, which reveal a decrease of congenital cataract as a cause of visual impairment in children in the Netherlands in the last 20 years. A group of 140 visually impaired children with congenital cataract that have been sent to our institute will be analyzed. Patient-characteristics, diagnosis and rehabilitation possibilities will be described. In visually impaired children accommodation is important to perceive small objects at near. In children, after cataract extraction, accommodation is not possible and bifocals are used. The use of bifocals will also be discussed.

Biography

F Nienke Boonstra MD, PhD, started to specialize in Pediatric Ophthalmology in 1987. In 1991 she started to work in Bartiméus, Institute for the Visually Impaired and focused on the visual development of children with or without visual impairment and on the use of low vision aids in children. She performs research in Ophthalmogenetics in collaboration with the Department of Human Genetics, Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen and research in the development of the visual system in collaboration with Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior, Department of Cognitive Neuroscience, Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center. In this collaboration she focuses on eye movement recording, crowding and accommodation in children.

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