To the Editor—I thoroughly enjoyed the review by Vann et al.\(^1\) of anesthesia for ophthalmology. However, I was surprised by their quotation from Pecka and Dexter.\(^2\) "These authors commented that there is ‘no justification to decreasing the amount of time that anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetists spend caring for patients undergoing cataract extraction with a retrobulbar block’" (italics added).

The full paragraph is as follows:

"...we note that these procedures can be conducted under a sub-Tenon block that the surgeon can administer to the topicanized eye on the surgical field. As far as his concerns about sedation, we covered sedation techniques and outcomes in the article, also noting that patient expectations as well as demographic and regional differences often account for choice of sedation during a block. We appreciate his use of alternative techniques such as transcutaneous electrical stimulation as an alternative to sedation techniques needs to be formally evaluated before it can be recommended for routine use."

Second, in reply to Dr. Bourke, we appreciate his concerns about topical anesthesia and emphasize in our article that the best technique for local/regional anesthesia considers the surgeon’s skill and anesthesiologist’s comfort as well as patient needs. Regarding the conversion of a phaco procedure during topical anesthesia to vitreoretinal surgery, we note that these procedures can be conducted under a sub-Tenon block that the surgeon can administer to the topicanized eye on the surgical field. As far as his concerns about sedation, we covered sedation techniques and outcomes in the article, also noting that patient expectations as well as demographic and regional differences often account for choice of sedation during a block. We appreciate his use of alternative techniques such as transcutaneous electrical stimulation as an alternative to sedation techniques needs to be formally evaluated before it can be recommended for routine use.

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References


2. Pecka SL, Dexter F: Anesthesia providers’ interventions during cataract extraction under monitored anesthesia care. AANA J 1997; 65:357-60

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