Author Response: Biomechanical Responses of Lamina Cribrosa to Intraocular Pressure Change Assessed by Optical Coherence Tomography in Glaucoma Eyes

Our recent publication noted several features of change in anterior lamina depth (ALD) with change in intraocular pressure (IOP) in glaucoma patients. ALD changed more in the lower ranges of IOP than at higher ranges, which represents the expected increased stiffening of biomaterials in regions of higher stress. Some eyes exhibited movement of the lamina out of the eye at lower IOP—a behavior that is more likely when the peripapillary sclera is more compliant. This was more common in eyes with less glaucoma damage. The regions of the lamina that moved more were in its vertical poles, above and below, as suggested by the lower density of connective tissue in the lamina there. Within an individual optic nerve head (ONH), there was greater displacement with IOP change in clock hours that retained more normal nerve fiber layer. Compliance of ALD may be a relevant and practical biomarker for glaucoma susceptibility by noninvasive imaging. None of these findings are affected by the issue discussed in the Letter to the Editor.

The letter by Rebolleda et al.2 discusses the reference plane for images in optical coherence tomography (OCT) of the optic nerve head. In past work in this field, Bruch’s membrane opening (BMO) has been the standard reference plane, and our paper used it as well, both for consistency with the literature and because we recognize that it is the best of three alternatives: BMO, choroidal–scleral interface (CSI), or RPE. The reasons that BMO position is the best reference are as follows: (1) it is visible in 100% of scans; (2) it can be detected by automated software without human “marking”;(3) it does not change in size or shape with moderate shifts in IOP (documented in our paper); and (4) the putative change in its position with IOP change due to choroidal thickness change as suggested by Rebolleda et al. is not a significant issue. It is important to distinguish choroidal thickness in the immediate peripapillary area from that of the choroid underlying the macula. Rebolleda et al. refer to choroidal thickness changes in two cited references (their references 6 and 7), but these investigations (one of them by our group) studied change in choroidal thickness with IOP change in the macular area, not near the disc. The peripapillary choroid tapers down to the disc center) leads to a reference plane that practically runs right through the anterior lamina border, making its depth essentially zero when it clearly is posterior to the BMO inlet. In these eyes, a CSI reference plane (artifactitiously) produce huge changes in ALD as a percent of baseline. (6) We measured and published choroidal thickness change in the macular zone of many of the patients in the present study. There is macular choroidal thickening of 2 to 3 μm/mm Hg lowering of IOP. By contrast, our peripapillary measurements of choroidal thickness at the BMO showed minor and variable change compared with those of the macular zone.

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References

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