What is this month’s mystery condition? Join the conversation at aao.org/eyenet, where you can post a comment on this image.

Last month’s blink

Metabolic Cataract: A Presenting Sign of Uncontrolled Diabetes Mellitus

A 55-year-old taxi driver with hypertension and dyslipidemia presented to our clinic with blurred vision in his left eye that had been deteriorating for the past 2 months and was interfering with his work. On examination, visual acuity in his left eye was counting fingers at 5 ft and 20/100 in the right. He had advanced bilateral cortical and posterior subcapsular cataracts in both eyes. During routine blood tests prior to surgery, fasting serum glucose measured 212 mg/dL with hemoglobin A1c of 9.7%. The patient was subsequently diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (DM) and started on sitagliptin/metformin 50/1,000 mg and glimepiride 2 mg. Cataract surgeries were unremarkable, and the patient’s vision improved to 20/20 bilaterally.

Early diagnosis of DM can be challenging. Blurred vision and visual loss commonly present as initial symptoms.1,2 Although acute diabetic cataracts are rarely encountered in clinical practice today, a young adult with rapidly maturing bilateral cortical cataracts should have a diabetic workup.


Written by Asaf Achiron, MD, The Edith Wolfson Medical Center, Holon, Israel, and Uri Aviv, MD, Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel. Photo by Dr. Achiron.