

Gray crescent of the optic nerve head

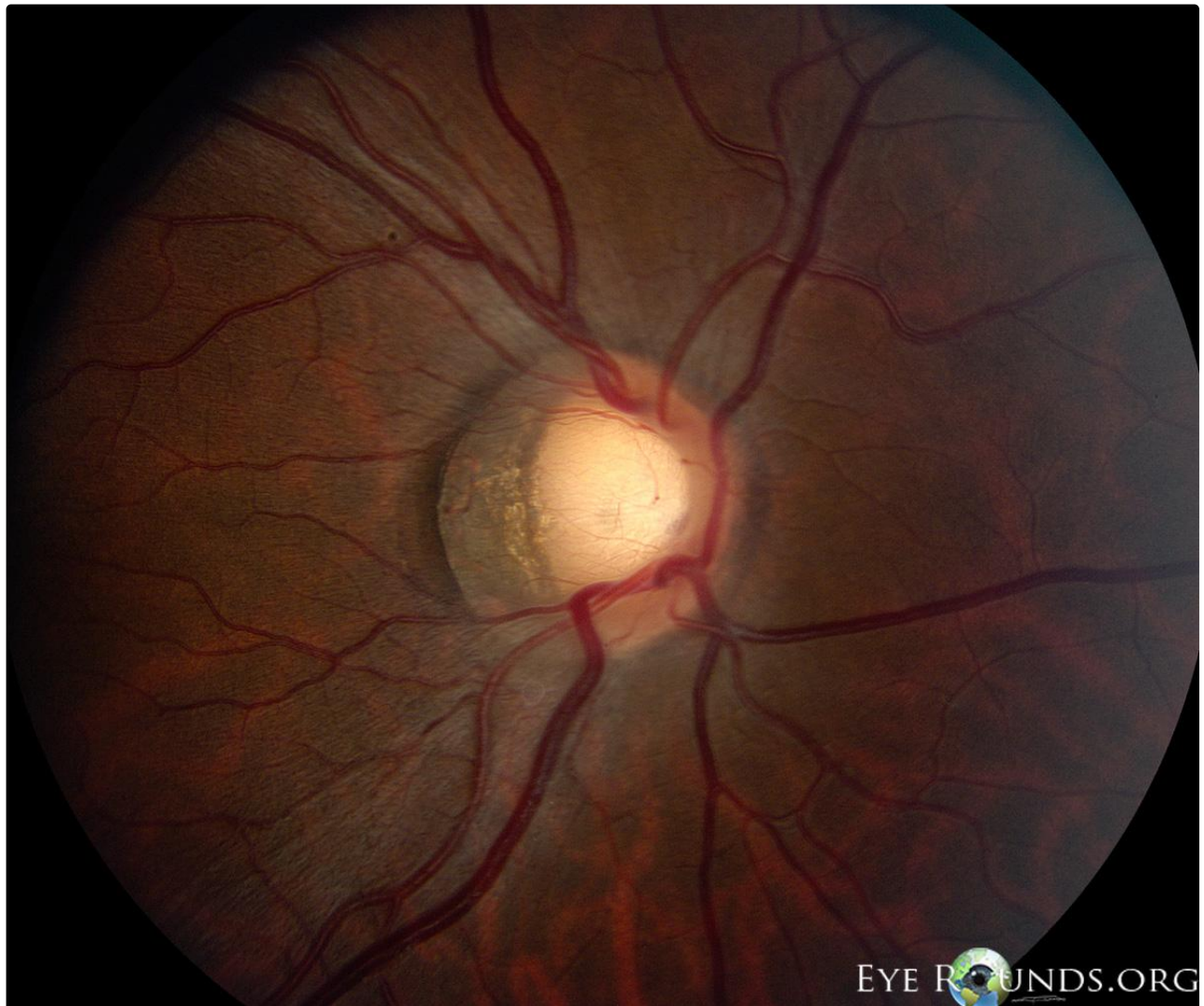
Category(ies): Glaucoma, Iris

Contributor: [Justin Risma, MD](#)

Photographer: Brice Critser, CRA



Gray crescents of the optic nerve head are crescent-shaped areas of slate gray pigmentation in the substance of the peripheral optic nerve head. They are more common in African American patients, but are not associated with an increased risk of glaucoma. They are important to recognize and differentiate from peripapillary pigmentation, because failing to do so might lead one to misinterpret the width of the neuroretinal rim. This 34-year-old African American male might appear to have severe thinning of the temporal neuroretinal rim, but if the examiner traces the margin of the optic disc carefully and realizes there is a gray crescent, he will appreciate the rim of healthy optic nerve tissue temporally. Optical coherence tomography revealed normal thickness of the retinal nerve fiber layer in all quadrants surrounding the optic nerve head.



This 34-year-old African American male might appear to have severe thinning of the temporal neuroretinal rim, but if the examiner traces the margin of the optic disc carefully and realizes there is a gray crescent, he will appreciate the rim of healthy optic nerve tissue temporally.

 [Enlarge](#)

 [Download](#)

References:

1. Shields, MB. Gray Crescent in the Optic Nerve Head. American Journal of Ophthalmology. 1980; 89:238-244.

Image Permissions:



Ophthalmic Atlas Images by [EyeRounds.org](#), [The University of Iowa](#) are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Address

University of Iowa
Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College
of Medicine
Department of Ophthalmology and
Visual Sciences
200 Hawkins Drive
Iowa City, IA 52242

[Support Us](#)

Legal

Copyright © 2019 The University of
Iowa. All Rights Reserved
[Report an issue with this page](#)
[Web Privacy Policy](#) |
[Nondiscrimination Statement](#)

Related Links

[Cataract Surgery for Greenhorns](#)
[EyeTransillumination](#)
[Gonioscopy.org](#)
[Iowa Glaucoma Curriculum](#)
[Iowa Wet Lab](#)
[Patient Information](#)
[Stone Rounds](#)
[The Best Hits Bookshelf](#)

EyeRounds Social Media

[Follow](#)



Receive notification of new cases,
[sign up here](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Submit a Suggestion](#)