Tadpole Pupil

Category (ies): Neuro-ophthalmology, Iris

Contributor: Kristina Damisch, M2 and Lorraine Provencher, MD

A tadpole pupil (pictured below, right eye) occurs with segmental spasm of the iris dilator muscle producing episodic pupillary distortion, often in the shape of a tadpole. Dr. Stan Thompson of the University of Iowa, Department of ophthalmology, first coined this phenomenon as a “tadpole pupil” in 1983. This intermittent, irregular mydriasis usually lasts less than five minutes but has been described to last up to 15 minutes. It may occur several times per day, over several days to weeks. Tadpole pupil usually resolves without recurrence, but it does have a strong association with the subsequent development of a Horner’s Syndrome. Tadpole pupil has also been associated with Adie tonic pupil and migraines. Hence, clinicians should consider additional workup for these entities.

References:

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