Evaluation of preoperative anxiety in patients requiring glaucoma filtration surgery
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Purpose: Preoperative anxiety is often expressed by patients requiring filtration surgery for their glaucoma. So far, there has been no scale for screening this group of patients for preoperative anxiety. The APAIS is a self-evaluation questionnaire which has been used in other specialties than ophthalmology and which makes it possible to identify the adult patients with a high level of preoperative anxiety due to a future surgical procedure. The objective of this study is to estimate the preoperative anxiety in glaucoma patients requiring a filtration surgery.

Methods: We performed a prospective study on 30 adult patients with chronic glaucoma not responding to medical treatment and who were about to undergo a filtration surgery (trabeculectomy or nonpenetrating sclerectomy). The APAIS score was given to the patients before the surgical procedure. A global anxiety score (ranging from 4 to 20) above 10, defined patients with a high level of preoperative anxiety. We tried to identify among these patients the factors related to filtration surgery which caused them anxiety (lack of control of intraocular pressure, risk of blindness, presence of the filtering bleb).

Results: In our sample of patients we found that glaucoma was a source of anxiety. That was also true for the surgical procedure, though most patients believe that once the decision has been taken, their psychological status was not modified by the upcoming procedure. The patient-clinician relationship is important in any chronic disease and that is all the more true in glaucoma since this disease remains asymptomatic for a long time. When a filtration surgery is needed, the patients are going to feel less preoperative anxiety if they trust their physician and if adapted information has been given to them.

Conclusions: The APAIS is a short scale, easy to fill in by the patients, that can be recommended for evaluating anxiety and patients’ need for information before a surgical procedure. It is usually easier for the surgeon to find ways to reduce the patient’s anxiety if a relationship of trust has been established between the two.