Pulsatile Proptosis

MICHAEL E. MIGLIORI, MD, FACS

A patient with a known history of Neurofibromatosis type I complained of pulsations around her left eye in 2004. The pulsations became more prominent over the years. Her visual acuity is not affected by the pulsations. In addition to the pulsations, she has multiple cutaneous neurofibromas and Lisch nodules on her irides. Although she could feel the pulsations, her vision was not affected.

Pulsatile proptosis in neurofibromatosis is due to progressive dysplasia of the sphenoid wing. Pulsations may be quite pronounced, but the vision is rarely affected. The differential diagnosis of pulsatile proptosis includes Neurofibromatosis type I, carotid cavernous fistula, orbital roof fracture, and arterio-venous malformation. The presence of the characteristic cutaneous findings of neurofibromatosis in this patient along with the characteristic imaging established the diagnosis.

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Correspondence

Michael E. Migliori, MD, FACS
Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology,
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, RI;
Ophthalmologist-in-Chief, Department of Ophthalmology, Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, RI
Coro Center
One Hoppin Street, Suite 202
Providence RI 02903-4171
401-444-6551
Fax 401-444-6587
mmigliori@lifespan.org

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Please include authors’ names (limited to two authors), academic positions, address, email and telephone number.

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