LESSONS FROM THE FRONT LINE

A 6-year-old boy was taken to a routine appointment at the high street optician because of a few weeks of occasional mild headaches. The optician noted blurred disc margins and the child was referred direct to Moorfields Eye Hospital where papilloedema was confirmed. An MRI and lumbar puncture (opening pressure of 33cmH₂O (normal is up to 28cmH₂O)) at Homerton then confirmed Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension (IIH).

Dr Ola Joseph, paediatric trainee, put this slide together to remind us of the features of IIH and of the importance of an eye test in children. For patients in the same boat, the local optician and https://patient.info/doctor/examination-eyes can be useful.

Who gets IIH?

- Typical young, obese female post pubertal (also seen in adults with IIH)
- Atypical: prepubertal, usually not overweight

How does it present?

- Blood pressure (notoriously high with IIH)
- Neurological exam
- MRI brain - MR venography
- Lumbar puncture opening pressures ≥ 28 cm H₂O is elevated!

Management

- Ref to neuro-opthalmology
- Aim is to prevent permanent visual loss, reduce headache
- Weight loss if obese/overweight
- Medical: acetazolamide (reduce glaucoma risk of metabolic acidosis)
- Surgical: CSF diversion
- Regular ophthalmological review to assess if papilloedema is worsening

Take home points

- Ophthalmological/opticians review if persistent headaches
- IIH is associated with obesity, so calculating BMI. Remember can be atypical

What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?

Dr Isabel Wilson explains ...

"Humane, supportive & practical assistance to fellow human beings who recently suffered a serious stressor"

PFA is designed to reduce the initial stress of traumatic events and to enable resilience and long-term coping. Aimed initially at survivors of natural disasters and terrorism, the 8 core actions are applicable wherever people have been traumatised.

Further PFA Resources:

- WHO guidance: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548205

PIMS-TS has meant we have had to look up paediatric reference ranges for troponin, fibrinogen etc. we never usually request. I thought the document below which features normal paediatric ranges for all sorts of tests might be useful for GPs.