

Adam Zamenhof and His Non-Surgical Ocular Therapy - a Historical Overview

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Introduction: Adam Zamenhof (1888-1940) was the son of Polish ophthalmologist Dr Ludwik Eleazar Zamenhof (1859–1917), creator of the international language Esperanto and social movement for peace and tolerance. Mainly recognized as excellent ocular surgeon, Adam Zamenhof soon emerged as authority in the field of ophthalmology in Poland between Two World Wars. However, he focused at methods of non-surgical therapy of various ocular disorders.

Results: Adam Zamenhof was receptive to therapeutic innovation which spared a patient from surgical intervention. He reported on a treatment by Dr Kerschman, an ophthalmologist from Białystok, who used egg white in troublesome corneal wounds, erosions and ulcerations as occurring in keratitis herpetica and in corneal inflammation. The use of egg derivatives in ocular disorders has a long-standing tradition. He also recommended warm compresses soaked in boric acid or Burrow's solution in the management of most cases of internal hordeolum. As a result, small abscesses of Meibom's glands only rarely required drainage of pus. In severe inflammatory reactions he prescribed anti-staphylococcal vaccines and in frequent recurrences an autovaccine prepared from the patient's purulent discharge.

Conclusions: By means of his profound interest in non-surgical ocular therapy, Adam Zamenhof was able to effectively cure selected ophthalmic disorders without surgical intervention and could exclude some of ocular diseases from unnecessary eye operation.