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6th Cairo Retina Meeting, an eye-opener

PATIENTS who are suffering from short sight (myopia) in its early stages will be prone to having problems with their retina, according to Dr Ehab el-Rayes, an ophthalmologist at the Ophthalmology Research Institute. He said it was necessary to pay more attention to the initial symptoms of retinal problems including the appearance of what is known as musca volitans (floaters), or shadows or sudden flashes of light. He stressed the importance of regular checkups.

Dr el-Rayes was speaking at the sixth Cairo International Retina Meeting (CRM) which was recently held in Cairo and was organised in collaboration with the Arab-African Society of Retina Specialists and the American Society of Retina Specialists.

The conference included three workshops, the first focused on diagnostic radiology inside the eye, the second highlighted the modern uses of sophisticated tools in retinal detachment surgery, while the third concentrated on the drugs that are injected into the eye to prevent the complications that affect people who have diabetes.

One of the research papers discussed during the conference, said Dr el-Rayes, was about the discovery of the gene responsible for vision problems in old age. The



Dr Ehab el-Rayes

paper said that these problems could be overcome by prescribing anti-oxidants and certain types of food to patients, after studying their genetic map.

According to Dr el-Rayes, a centre will soon be opened in the Middle East which, for the first time, will provide a new technique to help blind people partially to regain their sight. The new technique involves placing a device inside the eye that allows the patient to see, to a certain extent. The conference also tackled the use of genetic therapy and stem cells in the treatment of chronic retinal atrophy diseases.

A number of studies conducted in the United States about the declining use of the laser in treating certain eye diseases was the subject of one of the conference's sessions. The alternative therapy is the use of injections, which is especially useful for diabetics, according to Dr el-Rayes.