Miscellaneous Medical Treatment and Conditions with Potential for Visual Loss
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Not all "injuries" to the eyes or vision occur as the result of trauma. Certain medical conditions or treatments may result in visual or ocular damage, sometimes avoidable, but sometimes not. In premature infants for example, prolonged (but life-sustaining) oxygen therapy can result in retinopathy of prematurity. This is a peripheral retinal condition that, at its most severe, results in irreparable retinal detachment and visual loss. Mild cases may cause no visual loss, and in most settings these infants are monitored very closely for possible changes of retinopathy of pre-maturity.

Certain medications can cause damage to the optic nerves or retinas. Ethambutol, which is used to treat tuberculosis, may cause an irreversible optic neuropathy even when recognized early and the drug is stopped. Plaquenil, which is used for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis may cause damage to the retina and loss of visual acuity. This is reversible if recognized early and the drug is stopped.

Any medical condition or treatment which causes interruption of normal blood flow or nourishment to the brain can cause visual loss, by affecting the occipital lobes or the visual radiation fibers that are traveling to the occipital lobes from the chiasm. Cerebral vascular accidents (strokes) may cause visual loss on this basis or any condition, such as prolonged cardiac arrest, which can lead to brain anoxia.

There are many other conditions and situations in which visual loss may occur. No matter what the exact cause of the visual loss, visual impairment can be assessed as a necessary step for medial-legal reasons as well as rehabilitation and life care planning.