

**DEFINITION**

1. Uveitis means inflammation of the uveal tract which consists of three parts, namely, the choroid, the ciliary body and the iris. The condition may affect the whole or part of the uveal tract.
2. The condition may be primary or it may be secondary to another disease process. If the iris and choroid body are involved it is known as **anterior** uveitis (iritis, cyclitis or iridocyclitis), if the choroid is involved it is **posterior** uveitis (choroiditis) and if all are involved it is **generalised** uveitis.

**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

3. The presentation depends on the severity of the inflammation, the part of the uveal tract affected and the rapidity of its onset. Acute anterior uveitis causes a red painful eye. Posterior uveitis usually presents with visual floaters or blurred vision. In the acute phase vision is diminished. This recovers considerably in the intervals between attacks but each acute attack leaves a degree of permanent visual defect. Specialist examination may be needed to confirm the diagnosis. Prolonged inflammation may result in additional impaired vision due to cataract, glaucoma or retinal damage.

**AETIOLOGY**

4. The aetiology of **primary** uveitis is not known.
5. **Secondary** uveitis may result from a large variety of causes. It may be caused by intraocular infection, allergy, surgery or it may occur in close time relationship to trauma to the eye. It may be associated with an adjacent inflammatory focus such as scleritis, keratitis or retinal vasculitis. It may be part of an eye infection caused by herpes zoster, toxoplasmosis, toxocara, syphilis or tuberculosis. It may also be associated with a variety of systemic conditions, including sarcoidosis, Reiter's syndrome, ankylosing spondylitis, Still's disease, Behcet's disease and other autoimmune diseases.
6. The aetiology of secondary uveitis is that of the primary condition.

**CONCLUSION**

7. Uveitis is an inflammatory disease of the eye, which may be primary, when its aetiology is unknown, or secondary to other eye disease or systemic disease.

**REFERENCES**

Miller S J H. Parsons' Diseases of the Eye. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 18<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1990. p171-187.

Spalton D J. Disorders of the eye in general medicine. In: Weatherall DJ et al (Eds.). Oxford Textbook of Medicine. Oxford: Oxford Medical Pubs. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1987. 23.7-23.14.

