



Title	Prevalence and spatial distribution of cystoid spaces in retinitis pigmentosa: investigation with spectral domain optical coherence tomography.
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1	Prevalence and spatial distribution of cystoid spaces in retinitis pigmentosa:
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1 Abstract

PURPOSE: To investigate the prevalence and spatial distribution of cystoid spaces (CS) $\mathbf{2}$ in retinitis pigmentosa (RP) patients with spectral domain optical coherence tomography 3 4 (SD-OCT). METHODS: 529 eyes of 275 patients with RP were examined with spectral domain $\mathbf{5}$ optical coherence tomography. Presence or absence of CS was judged for each eye. 6 $\overline{7}$ Retinal layer and outer retinal status where the CS existed were also investigated. Statistical analysis was done using one eve per one patient. 8 RESULTS: CS were present in 119/529 eyes (22.5%) of 74/275 patients (26.9%). There 9 10 were no significant differences between the cases with and without CS except for central foveal thickness (p < 0.001). CS were noted in inner nuclear layer (INL) in almost all eyes 11 (98.6%) and outer nuclear layer (ONL)/outer plexiform layer (OPL) was also involved in 1213many eyes (27.8%). CS were sometimes seen in ganglion cell layer (6.9%). CS were 14predominantly (78.9%) distributed in the relatively preserved retina where external limiting membrane was retained. The presence of epiretinal membrane (ERM) or 15posterior vitreous adhesion was associated with the presence of CS (p<0.001) but 16showed no relationship with the spatial location of CS (p=1.000). 1718 CONCLUSIONS: The prevalence of CS in RP patients was 26.9% and contrary to 19 previous reports, most CS were present in INL. In addition, most CS were observed in relatively retained retina, which is compatible to prevailing notion. ERM or posterior 20vitreous adhesion was also associated with the development of CS. The distribution of 21

 $\mathbf{2}$

1 CS in inner and preserved retina may provide insight for the pathogenesis of CS in RP.

 $\mathbf{2}$

1 INTRODUCTION

Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is sometimes complicated by cystoid macular edema (CME). $\mathbf{2}$ which may impair central vision in any stage of the disease.¹ Several therapeutic 3 4 strategies have target CME in RP patients including topical or oral administration of carbonic anhydrase inhibitor,²⁻⁷ steroid administration,⁸⁻¹⁰ intravitreal injection of $\mathbf{5}$ 6 anti-vascular endothelial growth factor agent,¹¹ photocoagulation,^{12, 13} or even vitrectomy.¹⁴ The beneficial effects of each of these therapies are not consistently $\overline{7}$ observed in all patients. The establishment of the rapeutic approaches is complicated by 8 9 the limited knowledge regarding the pathophysiology of CME in RP patients. Some mechanisms including anti-retinal antibodies^{15, 16} vitreous traction,¹² RPE dysfunction,^{17,} 10 ¹⁸ and Müller cell edema¹⁹⁻²¹ were proposed. If there are several etiologies for the 11 development of CME, different therapeutic strategies may be required to treat each 12etiology. However, the evidence for how these mechanisms are involved in the 13development of CME is limited. 14

To investigate the etiology of CME in RP patients, we focused on retinal layers where cystoid spaces (CS) are located. As cysts are not limited to macular tissues, we use the term cystoid spaces in the present study. Some of the retinal structures, e.g., the inner and outer plexiform layers contain abundant tortuous dendritic processes, connecting fibers, and invaginated synapses, which are considered to work as a barrier.²² The external limiting membrane consists of zonula adherens between apical processes of Müller cells and photoreceptors of the inner segment, and limits the

diffusion of large molecules such as albumin.²³ The semi-permeable nature is thought to 1 contribute to the accumulation of intra-retinal fluid.²⁴ Thus, we hypothesize that these $\mathbf{2}$ structures may affect the distribution of CS in different etiologies. 3 4 The main location of CS in pseudophakic macular edema is the inner nuclear layer (INL), throughout the majority of retinal layers in patients with central retinal vein $\mathbf{5}$ occlusion, and predominantly in the outer plexiform layer (OPL) in diabetic macular 6 edema.²⁵ In addition, Tsujikawa et al. investigated retinal vein occlusion and suggested $\overline{7}$ that CME progresses to serous detachment when the barriers of external limiting 8 membrane (ELM) break down.²⁶ These studies indicate that the distribution of CS is 9 dependent on the etiology and retinal status and the patient. While histological 10 examination of the retina is both difficult and impractical in routine clinical investigations, 11 optical coherence tomography (OCT) is widely used to study retinal pathologies and has 12also been used for the diagnosis and monitoring of RP. For example, OCT has been 13shown to be more sensitive, or at least as sensitive, as fluorescein angiography for the 14detection of CME in RP.²⁷⁻²⁹ Other studies showed that evaluating retinal structure with 15OCT is useful for the assessment of retinal function.³⁰⁻³⁶ 16 Little evidence exists as to which layer is predominantly involved in the 1718development of CS associated with RP, with the exception of a single report with a small case series.³⁷ We assumed that detailed evaluation of retina using OCT in larger 19numbers of RP patients would provide some insight in the pathogenesis of CME in RP.

numbers of RP patients would provide some insight in the pathogenesis of CME in RP.

In addition to the retinal "layers", we investigated retinal "areas" where CS exist.

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There is a prevailing notion that CME less frequently occurs in the late stages of the 1 degenerative pathology,¹ but this is yet to be clearly shown to our knowledge. In the $\mathbf{2}$ present study, we also investigated outer retinal integrity and the association with CS 3 4 location to confirm whether CS preferentially occurs in early to moderate stage RP. As an indicator of outer retinal preservation, ELM, which were reported to be correlated with $\mathbf{5}$ visual function in various diseases^{38, 39} was used. 6 $\overline{7}$ METHODS All procedures conformed to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki and the study 8 design was prospectively approved by the Institutional Review Board and ethical 9 committee at Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine. The review board waived 10 the need for written informed consent because the study design consisted of 11 retrospective chart review. 1213Participant information Diagnosis of RP was made with clinical interview of family history, the presence of night 14blindness, characteristic fundus appearance, concentric or ring shaped scotoma in 15Goldmann perimetry, and the result of electroretinogram (ERG). Full-field ERGs were 16recorded according to ISCEV standard protocol recommended in 2004 or 2008⁴⁰ using 1718 LS-C (Mayo Co, Nagoya, Japan) and Neuropack MEB-2204 (Nihon Kohden, Tokyo, Japan). We retrospectively reviewed 529 eyes of 275 patients with RP (120 men and 155 19women) who underwent spectral domain (SD)-OCT scan with Spectralis (Spectralis 20HRA+OCT®; Heidelberg Engineering, Heidelberg, Germany) from February 2008 to 21

1	September 2011. In the present study, we use the term RP as to indicate progressive
2	rod cone dystrophy, which was classified in the previous review article. ⁴¹ We routinely
3	perform SD-OCT examination for patients who visited our degenerative retinal disease
4	service at each visit. Thus, the investigated population represents almost all RP patients
5	who visited our institution during the period. Those who showed a subnormal or
6	non-recordable electroretinogram were included. The thinning of outer nuclear layer and
7	the disruption of outer retinal structures including inner segment / outer segment junction
8	depicted with SD-OCT were considered to represent retinal degeneration in the area and
9	the findings were used to confirm the diagnosis. ⁴² We carefully excluded Leber's
10	congenital amaurosis(LCA), cone rod dystrophy, X-linked retinoschisis, choroideremia,
11	Stargardt disease, paraneoplastic retinopathy, or autoimmune retinopathy.
12	We further analyzed age, visual acuity, mean central foveal thickness (CFT; μ m),
13	and score of mean deviation (MD) in a Humphrey field analyzer using the Mann-Whitney
14	U test. Visual acuities were measured with Landolt C and were converted to the
15	logarithm of the minimum angle of resolution (logMAR) equivalents. The Spectralis
16	HRA+OCT has a built-in digital caliper to measure thickness or length. We measured the
17	thickness at the center of the fovea with horizontal and vertical B-scan images, and
18	averaged scores were used as the CFT. Humphrey field analyzer tests were performed
19	within 6 months of OCT examination with the program of Swedish Interactive Threshold
20	Algorithm standard 10-2.

21 Measurements of Cystoid Spaces (CS)

 $\mathbf{7}$

1	Cross-hair scans, which consisted of horizontal and vertical 30-degree scans, centered
2	on the fovea were obtained. Six-line over 20-degree radial scans and over 30×10 -degree
3	volume scans centered on the fovea were also obtained. Automated eye tracking and
4	averaging was used for each measurement as follows: 100 averages for cross scans,
5	more than 20 averages for radial scans, and more than 2 averages for volume scans.
6	When a patient underwent serial OCT examinations, the most recent series of scans
7	were analyzed.
8	Patients were categorized by presence or absence of CS. Patients with even a
9	single CS were categorized as having CS. Throughout the present study, SD-OCT
10	images were evaluated by two independent investigators (YM, AO). In cases of
11	discrepancies, a third investigator (KO) was consulted. And we also judged the existence
12	of epiretinal membrane (ERM) or posterior vitreous adhesion simultaneously.
13	Eyes with CS were further divided by the vertical and horizontal location of the
14	CS. Vertically, we divided according to the layer where CS existed: ganglion cell layer
15	(GCL), inner nuclear layer (INL) or outer nuclear layer (ONL)/OPL. When CS were found
16	in ONL or OPL, the border between ONL and OPL became unclear, thus we categorized
17	them together as ONL/OPL (Figure 1). Horizontally, we checked the location of CS in
18	relation to the area with preserved outer retinal structure. The presence of ELM was
19	considered to indicate relative preservation of outer retina. When even a single CS was
20	noted in the area where ELM was not preserved, patients were classified as having CS
21	outside the area of preserved outer retina (Figure 2).

1 Statistical analyses of data

Although we reviewed clinical records of 529 eyes of 275 patients, statistical analysis $\mathbf{2}$ was done using one eve per one patient, because the status of right and left eves of a 3 patient is considerably similar.⁴³ In cases with bilateral involvement, we used the left 4 eyes unless media opacity or poor fixation impaired the image quality. For those patients $\mathbf{5}$ where the examination of left eye showed inadequate quality, right eyes were used for 6 $\overline{7}$ the analysis. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Desktop (version 19.0, IBM Japan, Tokyo, Japan). Descriptive analyses are reported as means ± 8 standard deviation unless otherwise specified. Clinical characteristics were compared 9 10 between groups using Mann-Whitney U-test or Fisher's exact test or Yates Chi-square test, as appropriate. *P* values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. 11 12RESULTS 13**Prevalence of CS** CS were detected in 119 out of 529 eyes (22.5%) in 74 out of 275 patients (26.9%). 14Forty-five patients (60.8%) of the 74 patients had CS in both eyes. Among the studied 15subjects, 48 patients underwent genetic screening using microarray or direct sequencing. 1617Mutations in EYS gene was detected in 12 patients, mutations in RHO gene were detected in 3 patients, mutations in RDS gene were detected in 2 patients, and mutation 18

- 19 of CRX, FSCN2, ROM1, CRB1, and PDE6B were detected in one patient, respectively.
- 20 Characteristics of participants are shown in Table 1. There were no significant
- differences between those with and without CS except for CFT (p < 0.001). In fact, visual

1	acuity or MD measured with Humphrey perimeter in patients with or without CS showed
2	similar distribution in scatter gram. (Figure 3) In these 74 eyes, 18 eyes were
3	pseudophakic. Two eyes had undergone cataract surgery within one year of the
4	examination. We excluded these two eyes from the following analysis since recent
5	surgery might affect the development or the location of CS.44 The presence of ERM or
6	posterior vitreous adhesion was associated with the presence of CS (p <0.001).
7	Retinal location of CS
8	We investigated the location of CS in 72 eyes of 72 patients. CS were located in
9	GCL, INL, or ONL/OPL in all cases. Of the eyes with CS, 48 eyes (66.7%) had CS in the
10	INL (Figure 1, A) and 18 eyes (25.0%) had CS in the INL and OPL/ONL (Figure 1, B).
11	Five eyes had CS also in the ganglion cell layer (GCL); Three eyes (4.2%) had CS in the
12	GCL and INL, and two eye (2.8%) had them in the GCL, INL, and OPL/ONL (Figure 1, C).
13	Notably, CS were observed in the INL in 98.6% of investigated eyes. Only one eye
14	(1.4%) had an isolated intra-retinal space in the ONL, however, the image in the case
15	looked like a cleft and not a typical CS (Figure 1, D).
16	Considering the rare and atypical presentation, we excluded this case from the
17	following analysis. We classified the rest of 71 eyes into two groups: Group 1 who had
18	CS in the INL or in the INL and GCL (51 eyes), Group 2 who had CS in the INL and
19	ONL/OPL or in the INL, ONL/OPL, and GCL (20 eyes). When we compared these two
20	groups, there was no significant difference in age, foveal thickness, and MD. CFT was
21	marginally thicker in Group 2. (Table 2)

1	We then evaluated the retinal area where CS existed. In 56 eyes of 71 eyes with
2	CS (78.9%), CS were only found in the area where ELM was preserved, namely the area
3	with relatively retained outer retinal structure (Figure 2, A and B). In fact, several cases
4	showed asymmetric appearance in temporal and nasal retina, and only ipsilateral sides
5	with preserved ELM had CS (Figure 2, B). In the remainder, CS could be seen adjacent
6	to the remaining ELM (4 eyes, 5.6%; Figure 2, C), or in severely damaged retina with a
7	thin RPE (6 eyes, 8.5%; Figure 2, D). Evident vitreal traction was noted in 5 of 71 eyes,
8	in which ELM was not retained. (7.0%; Figure 2, E).
9	The presence of ERM or posterior vitreous adhesion showed no relationship with
10	the spatial location of CS ($p=1.000$).
11	DISCUSSION
12	In the present study, we showed that more than 20% of eyes with RP have retinal cysts
13	(termed cystoids spaces (CS) in the current study). CS are predominantly distributed in
14	the INL and in the area where the ELM is retained. The results suggest that the major
15	source of fluid collection in CS associated with RP occurs in the inner retina. In addition,
16	we confirm that CS associated with RP generally develop in areas of the retina that are
17	relatively well preserved.
18	CS were detected in 22.5% of patients and 60.8% of whom had CS in both eyes.
19	We found no difference in the prevalence of CS among each inheritance pattern and that
20	was consistent with a previous report. ⁴⁵ Previously reported prevalence of CME or CS in
21	RP patients ranges from 7.4–47%. ^{27, 31, 35, 45-49} These differences in prevalence may

1	partly stem from the method used to detect CS which include fluorescein angiography
2	(FA) or OCT. Previous reports showed the use of OCT rather than FA increases the
3	detection rate of CS. ²⁷⁻²⁹ Furthermore, image resolution is better with the current model
4	of SD-OCT, 50 which should further enhance detection sensitivity. The degree of CS
5	included in prior studies may also account for these discrepancies. Some authors report
6	the prevalence of CME based on macular involvement, and might have excluded minor
7	parafoveal CS. Consistently, our previous work using time-domain OCT reports that the
8	prevalence of CME was 7.5%, which would increase to 14.9% if minor CS were
9	included. ³¹ The result strongly suggests that OCT image resolution and the inclusion
10	criteria influences the reported prevalence of CME and highlights the need to carefully
11	consider inclusion criteria.
12	In the present study, almost all patients (98.6%) had CS in INL. When CS were
13	located in the GCL or ONL/OPL, they were almost always accompanied by CS in the INL.
14	Although statistically non-significant, those with CS in the INL tended to have better
15	visual acuity, suggesting the progression from CS in INL to INL+OPL/ONL. The frequent
16	distribution of CS in the inner retina was in conflict with a previous report. Catier et al.
17	reported that 88% of RP eyes with CME had CS in outer retinal layers. ³⁷ The
18	discrepancy may also stem from resolution of the images. In the report, the authors used
19	OCT 2000, which was a time-domain OCT model and resolution of the image was limited
20	in comparison to more recent models. In addition, the study only examined 8 patients,
21	therefore, the small sample size of the study might be biased toward evident CME, which

1	would not necessarily reflect the overall characteristics of CS associated with RP.
2	The preferential inner retinal distribution of CS may shed some light on the
3	pathology of CS in RP. Among some proposed mechanisms, the present result supports
4	the hypothesis of Müller cell dysfunction and swelling in the primary pathogenesis of
5	CME development. ⁵¹ The INL, where CS were predominantly distributed, is where Müller
6	cell bodies exist. In addition, as discussed below, around 80% of cases only had CS
7	located above the remaining ELM, which comprised zonula adherens of Müller cells and
8	photoreceptors. Although the evidence is indirect, the localization of CS in the INL and in
9	the area with preserved ELM supports the hypothesis that Müller cell dysfunction may
10	contribute to CME development in retinal degeneration. ^{21, 51, 52}
11	The present result supports the prevailing notion that CME seems less likely to
12	appear in the late stages of the degenerative pathology. ¹ For example, Lupo et al.
13	reported that RP patients with CME are younger than those with macular thinning and
14	vitreomacular traction. ³⁴ Most CS in the present study were found in areas with
15	preserved ELM. In addition, asymmetric distribution even within an eye as shown in
16	figure 2 suggests that CS preferentially develop in preserved areas of the retina. The
17	pathologic process including inflammation in degenerating retina might induce fluid
18	accumulation or the fibrotic changes in degenerated retina might prevent the formation of
19	CS.
20	The presence of ERM or posterior vitreous adhesion was associated with the

The presence of ERM or posterior vitreous adhesion was associated with the presence of CS (Table1, p<0.001) but showed no relationship with the location of CS

1 (Table2, p=1.000). In instances where CS were observed in damaged areas of the retina, OCT images often showed evident vitreal traction or the CS were found to be very small. $\mathbf{2}$ We also suggest that vitreous traction and retinal tissue loss are the major contributing 3 4 factors in cases of CS in advanced RP. There are several limitations to the present study. Firstly, we could not perform $\mathbf{5}$ FA in most patients because the examination is invasive and previous reports showed 6 that OCT is superior to FA in detecting CME.²⁷⁻²⁹ The findings from FA, if available, could $\overline{7}$ provide information about the involvement of inflammation or blood-retinal barrier 8 breakdown in CS development. Secondly, morphologic observation does not provide 9 direct evidence and other conclusions can be drawn from the observation. For example, 10 CS in the INL may be a result of vascular leakage. Although vascular leakage does not 11 appear to be a major contributor,⁵³ the present results do not exclude other possible 1213mechanisms. Thirdly, genetic screening was performed in part of the subjects, which 14identified few causative mutations. Lastly, we could not examine the circulating anti-retinal antibodies, which were suggested to be a major cause of CS in previous 15report of Heckenlively and associates.¹⁶ 16In conclusion, the prevalence of CS in RP was 22.5% when using SD-OCT. They 17were usually observed in the INL and in areas where ELM are preserved. ERM or 18 19posterior vitreous adhesion was also associated with the presence of CS. The distribution of CS indirectly supported the involvement of Müller cells in the pathogenesis. 20Further studies are needed to reveal the mechanism of CS in RP. 21

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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11

1 FIGURE LEGENDS

 $\mathbf{2}$

Figure 1: Spectral-domain optical coherence tomography (SD-OCT) images of patients
with cystoid spaces associated with retinitis pigmentosa.

We classified the eyes into two groups according to localization of cystoid spaces (CS). $\mathbf{5}$ (A) An image of the left eye of a 35-year-old female. CS are located only in the inner 6 nuclear layer (INL). These cases were classified as INL group. (B) An image of the left 7eve of a 47-year-old male. CS are located in the INL and outer plexiform layer /outer 8 9 nuclear layer (OPL/ONL). These cases were classified as INL+OPL/ONL group. (C) An image of the left eye of a 58-year-old male. CS are located in the ganglion cell layer 10 (GCL) and INL. The patient had CS also in OPL/ONL in another scan. These cases were 11 also classified as INL+OPL/ONL group regardless of the presence of CS in GCL. (D) An 1213image of the left eye of a 43-year-old female. This was an exceptional case, which showed CS or cleft-like space in OPL/ONL. The case was excluded from the comparison 14of location. Scale bar = $200 \,\mu m$ 15

16

17 Figure 2: Representative spectral-domain optical coherence tomography (SD-OCT)

18 images of retinitis pigmentosa (RP) patients with cystoid spaces (CS).

SD-OCT revealed a correlation between the location of CS and the remaining external 1920limiting membrane (ELM). A horizontal arrow indicates the area with remaining ELM. (A) An image of the left eye of a 35-year-old female. This is the most frequently observed 2122pattern, which suggests that CS are predominantly located on the remaining ELM. (B) An image of the left eye of a 70-year-old female. Several cases showed similar asymmetric 2324patterns. CS are observed only on the ipsilateral side where the ELM is preserved. (C) An image of the left eye of a 61-year-old male. Some cases (4.5%) showed CS adjacent 2526to the remaining ELM. (D) An image of the left eye of a 18-year-old male. Some cases (9%) presented small CS where the outer retina is severely damaged. (E) An image of 2728the left eye of a 71-year-old female. Epiretinal membrane was frequently observed in eyes with RP. Some cases were accompanied by vitreal traction as shown in the figure. 2930 Scale bar = $200 \,\mu m$

31

- 1 Figure 3: Comparison of central foveal thickness (CFT) and visual acuity (VA) or mean
- 2 deviation (MD).
- 3 The central foveal thickness was greater in the eyes with cystoid spaces (CS) but there
- 4 was no significant difference in visual acuity or MD between the eyes with and without
- 5 CS. \diamondsuit represents eyes without CS and \blacksquare represents eyes with CS. Solid straight
- 6 lines are the best fitting linear function for eyes without CS (logMAR VA: y=1.21-0.0045x,
- 7 MD: y=-35.8+0.0956x) and small-dashed straight lines are the best fitting linear function
- 8 for eyes with CS (logMAR VA: y=0.63-0.0013x, MD: y=-24.1+0.0253x)

1 **TABLES**

Table 1. Comparison of Patients with Retinitis Pigmentosa with and without

Cystoid Space

	With CS	Without CS	p-value*1
No	74	201	
Age(years)	49.97±16.13	50.65±16.46	0.801
logMAR VA	0.29±0.49	0.37±0.57	0.624
CFT(µm)	261.59±98.24	187.03±67.94	<0.001
MD(dB)	-17.44±8.91	-18.21±10.51	0.559
Effect of ERM or posterior	vitreous adhesio	n	
With ERM or posterior	50	70	
vitreous adhesion	58	78	
Without ERM or			< 0.001*2
posterior vitreous	16	123	
adhesion			
Mode of Inheritance			
AD	20	41	
AR	13	59	
X-linked	0	5	0.102*3
Sporadic	40	89	
Unknown	1	7	

CFT: central foveal thickness; CS: cystoid spaces; MD: mean deviation; AD: autosomal dominant; AR: autosomal ressesive

*1 Mann-whitney U test; *2 Fisher's exact test; *3 Chi square test

2

	Group 1	Group 2	
	INL	INL+ONL/OPL	p-value*1
No	51	20	
Age(years)	48.63±16.43	52.05±15.68	0.406
logMAR VA	0.28±0.55	0.27±0.29	0.248
CFT(µm)	244.40±81.17	307.23±124.73	0.068
MD(dB)	-17.44±8.51	-17.36±9.94	0.939
Effect of ERM or poste	rior vitreous adhesic	n	
With ERM or			
posterior vitreous	41	16	
adhesion			4 000*2
Without ERM or			1.000 2
posterior vitreous	10	4	
adhesion			
mode of inheritance			
AD	13	7	
AR	10	2	
X-linked	0	0	0.648*3
Sporadic	27	11	
Unknown	1	0	
INL: inner nuclear laye	r; ONL: outer nuclea	r layer; OPL: outer plexi	form layer;
CFT: central foveal thickness; MD: mean deviation; AD: autosomal dominant;			
AR: autosomal ressesive			

Cysts and with Inner/Outer Retinal Cysts

*1Mann-whitney U test; *2 Fisher's exact test;*3 Chi square test





