An Aye for an Eye

Anti-CMV device gets the wink, with warnings

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A new implant may put an end to needles in the eye for PWAs with CMV retinitis. “Patients didn’t appreciate weekly eye injections,” said Dr. David Musch, a University of Michigan researcher who helped develop the treatment. The device-a tiny ganciclovir-packed disk surgically fastened to the white of the eye-can be effective for up to six months, and then replaced. The original syringe treatment needed tending about every 70 days. One “implant” hitch bound to twitch eyebrows: The virus is more likely to creep into your other, untreated eye. A potential solution? Oral. “The other eye is susceptible to the same condition because the virus is systemic,” said Munsch, adding that the old IV sticker delivered drug automatically to both eyes. “We give the patient an oral tablet in hopes of protecting the other eye.” Research is under way to determine the effectiveness of this one-two-punch. The hope is that a steady supply of ganciclovir to the retina can halt CMV’s progress and damage to your sight. “Over 5,000 units have been successfully implanted to date-all in HIV patients,” said a rep of the implant manufacturer, Chiron Vision.

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