

Lateral Canthotomy

Q: A 22 year old male presents after getting punched in his right eye complaining of pain and blurry vision. Exam shows decreased visual acuity on the right with a RAPD, proptosis, an IOP of 37 and diffuse subconjunctival hemorrhage. What bedside exam can help confirm your suspected diagnosis of retrobulbar hematoma?

A: POCUS of the eye showing a “guitar pick sign” in the patient with direct blunt trauma to the eye is very suggestive of a retrobulbar hematoma. This POCUS finding occurs when the hematoma compresses the globe causing it to appear triangular in shape. Rather than delaying critical emergency treatment (lateral canthotomy and cantholysis) by obtaining a CT scan of the orbit, POCUS allows a rapid diagnosis and no delay to vision saving treatment.

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