**PHYSIOLOGY**

The tear film that covers the surface of the eye is composed of three layers:

1. superficial oily layer.
2. middle layer of tear fluid.
3. mucoid layer.

This moist layer serves:

1. An optical function by maintaining an optically uniform corneal surface.
2. A mechanical function by flushing foreign matter from the cornea and conjunctival sac.
3. A corneal nutritional function.

Normal tear condition depends upon:

1. Lids with their mucous glands that are normal in position and function.
2. Atmospheric pressure and humidity for partial evaporation of tears.
3. Massage action of the orbicularis.
4. Capillary action to draw tears from papilla lacrimalis into the canaliculi.

5. Vaccume created suction to carry tears into the sac.

6. Gravity to draw tears into the inferior nasal meatus.

Tears get in the canaliculi partly through the capallarity and partly through the contractions of orbicularis. Canaliculi becoming shorter and wider during contraction of the orbicularis. Medial palpebral ligament which is situated anteriorly and Horner's muscle which is situated posteriorly in relation to the sac also contribute in the passage of tears into the sac.

The tears are expelled from the sac by its own elasticity, hence in those pathological conditions, in which the sac has lost its elasticity (atony of sac) the downward conduction of tears are arrested although the naso-lacrimal duct is quite patent.

Contraction and malposition of the puncts, stricture and true obstruction of the canaliculi, descending infection from conjunctival sac and ascending infection from the nose and many other factors play in causing epiphora; and are important indication for dacryocystography.