

Theoretical derivation and clinical validation of the resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change—A Self-controlled Study

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1 **Title:**

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3 **resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change: A Self-**
4 **controlled Study**

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19

20 **[Abstract]**

21 **Purpose:** The aim of this study was to deduce theoretically and verify the resolution limit of human eye
22 to spherical lens change for more reasonable design of the trial lenses.

23 **Methods:** A total of 119 normal subjects with different myopia (not more than -6D) were included . First,
24 the resolution limit of discernible change in spherical power was derived based on the optical model.
25 Then, the subjects were observed to see if they could perceive the changes in spherical power as per the
26 resolution limit and compare the difference in the best corrected visual acuity obtained with the resolution
27 limit and interval of 0.25D.

28 **Results:** Assuming that the cone cell diameter is 3 μm and the pupil diameter of 4 mm, the theoretically
29 resolution limit was 0.05D. When the diopter of spherical power was increased, the ratios of ability to
30 perceive 0.05D spherical lens change were 98.3% and 96.7% in right and left eyes. When the diopter of
31 spherical power was decreased, the ratios of ability to perceive 0.05D spherical lens change were 78.9%
32 and 83.2% in right and left eyes. The best corrected visual acuity obtained with the 0.05 D interval trial
33 lens was significantly better than in the 0.25 D interval on both eyes (Right eye -0.04 ± 0.07 vs -0.02 ± 0.06 ,
34 $p < 0.001$; Left eye -0.07 ± 0.06 vs -0.04 ± 0.06 , $t=8.825$, $p < 0.001$).

35 **Conclusion:** The resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change was about 0.05D and the better
36 corrected visual acuity can be obtained by adjusting the spherical power at an interval of 0.05D.

37 **Trial registration number:** ChiCTR2100047074

38 **Date of registration:** 2021/6/7

39 **Key words** Spherical lens; resolution; limit value; red-green Duochrome balance test

40

41 **Introduction**

42 In the information age, the prevalence of myopia among adolescents is increasing year by year,
43 evidenced by up to 80% of myopia among Chinese high school students. Frame glasses are still the
44 main method for myopia correction. Previous studies have shown that overcorrection or
45 undercorrection will lead to the accelerated progression of myopia. Spherical-power full correction is
46 recommended for adolescent myopia^[1 2]. The red-green Duochrome test is an important step in
47 subjective refraction, and a method to determine the maximum plus to maximum visual acuity
48 (MPMVA)^[3]. At present, the spherical power is generally adjusted at 0.25D for optometry. In clinical
49 practice, we find that a considerable proportion of patients with clear red prototypes will directly see

50 clear green in case of a decrease by 0.25D, unable to achieve the red-green balance. In order to avoid
51 overcorrection, the prescription of optometry often chooses the diopter of undercorrection with clear
52 red prototypes.

53 From the middle of the 19th century to the early 20th century, the interval of spherical-power trial
54 case lenses was reduced from 1D to 0.25D and has been used up to now. However, we have not found
55 the theoretical basis for setting the interval at 0.25D, which may be related to the cost of lens
56 manufacturing at that time. In order to determine the adjustment interval of spherical-power lens more
57 scientifically and reasonably and help patients get better visual quality, this study firstly calculated the
58 theoretically derived resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change based on the optical model,
59 and then observed the actual resolution values of volunteers to compare the two for any consistency.

60 **Materials and Methods**

61 **Calculation of the theoretically derived resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change**

62 Let the diopter of a human eye optical model be A (D), the diameter of human cone cell B (μm), and
63 the pupil diameter x (mm). As shown in Fig. 1, the parallel light passes through the optical model of
64 human eye and forms a focus spot on the image plane (retina), exciting one cone cell only. When the
65 spherical lens with diopter y is decreased in front of the model, the focus moves back to the retina, and
66 the parallel light will form a diffuse spots in the retina. When the diameter of the diffuse spots is longer
67 than or equal to B, two cone cells will be excited, and may thus be perceived. The following formula
68 can be derived from Fig. 1:

$$69 \quad \frac{B}{1000 \times x} = \frac{\left(\frac{1}{(A-y)} - \frac{1}{A}\right)}{\frac{1}{A-y}} \quad (1)$$

$$70 \quad \frac{B}{1000 \times x} = 1 - \frac{A-y}{A} \quad (2)$$

$$71 \quad \frac{B}{1000 \times x} = \frac{y}{A} \quad (3)$$

$$72 \quad y = \frac{A \times B}{1000 \times x} \quad (4)$$

73 By substituting the total diopter of human eye, the diameter of cone cell and the pupil diameter in
74 Formula (4), we can derive the resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change. Since the value
75 of y is very small, the influence of the vertex distance on the Formula (1) can be ignored

76 **Clinical validation of the resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change**

77 **Study participants**

78 The data were prospectively collected from myopia volunteers who visited Beijing Tongren Hospital
79 from September 2020 to September 2021. The research was approved by the Human Studies
80 Committee at Beijing Tongren Hospital (Beijing, China) in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the
81 World Medical Association (registration number: ChiCTR2100047074). Subjects signed a statement of
82 informed consent prior to their participation in the study. Patient's inclusion criteria were as follows:
83 (1) patients with myopia not more than -6D, with corrected visual acuity ≥ 1.0 ; (2) those having

84 astigmatism with rule and $\leq 0.25D$; and (3) those having good compliance and able to complete the
85 optometry, and red-green balance check. Exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) patients complicated
86 with heterotropia, amblyopia or ocular infection and other eye diseases; (2) those with a history of
87 ocular trauma; (3) those undergoing surgery or other corrective therapy; and/or (4) those with refractive
88 errors caused by genetic or congenital factors.

89 **Examination procedures**

90 **Adjust the spherical power at an interval of 0.25D to find the red-green balance point**

91 Standard subjective refraction was performed using a standard phoropter. The monocular best vision
92 sphere was determined using the Duochrome chart to ensure the circle of least confusion was on the
93 retina before conducting Jackson Cross Cylinder (JCC). The circle of least confusion was maintained on
94 the retina as cylinder power was increased. Once cylinder power and axis were calculated, the sphere
95 was refined to best-corrected visual acuity (BCVA) with minimum minus power. Binocular balance using
96 alternate occlusion technique was then conducted to best binocular VA to BCVA with minimum minus
97 power.

98 Binocular balanced refraction results were placed in a trial frame and the eye not being tested was
99 occluded. Subjects were asked to give a response as to whether the letters on the red or green side of the
100 Duochrome were clearer. If the subject reported the red side being clearer, minus power was added in
101 0.25D steps until equality between red and green was achieved. If the subject reported the green side
102 being clearer, then plus 0.75D was added so that red became clearer. The same step as previously
103 described for when the side was clearer was then performed. The final sphere was where equality was
104 first achieved between the red and green letters of the Duochrome. If equality could not be achieved,
105 then the final sphere was the point where the next 0.25D change made green clearer. The final sphere,
106 and previously calculated cylindrical power and axis were recorded for the final prescription.

107 **Verify the resolution limit of change in spherical power**

108 Starting from the diopter of red-green balance point of equal clarity obtained by adjusting the
109 spherical power at an interval of 0.25D, the diopter of spherical power was increased and decreased by
110 one time of resolution limit, respectively. The volunteers were asked for any changes in the clarity of
111 the red and green optotypes either from equal clarity to green clarity or red clarity. If there was no
112 change, the point of equal clarity was used as the starting point again, and the diopter of spherical
113 power was changed by 2 times the resolution limit. The volunteers were then asked for any changes in
114 the clarity of optotypes. If still no change, the point of equal clarity was taken as the starting point to
115 further increase the range of changes in the diopter of spherical power (an integer multiple of the
116 resolution limit) until the clarity of optotypes changed.

117 In case of failure to identify the red-green balance point of equal clarity by adjusting the spherical
118 power at an interval of 0.25D, the maximum diopter of red clarity (an increase of -0.25D to be green
119 clarity) should be taken as the starting point, and the resolution limit as the interval to find the point of
120 equal clarity. After identifying the point of equal clarity, the limit of differences in the visually resolved
121 diopter of spherical power could be validated following the above steps. If the point of equal clarity

122 was still not found at the interval of the resolution limit, the diopter of spherical power was increased
123 by one time the resolution limit from the maximum diopter of red clarity to get green clarity, and the
124 volunteer's resolution limit was denoted as 1/2 of the resolution limit.

125 The prescription and the best corrected visual acuity were obtained by adjusting the spherical power
126 at an interval of 0.25D and the resolution limit, respectively. The prescription of spherical power was
127 determined according to the following principles: In case of a red-green balance point, the diopter of
128 equal clarity is taken as the prescription diopter of spherical power. In absence of the red-green balance
129 point, the maximum diopter of red clarity is taken as the prescription diopter of spherical power. The
130 two sets of trial case lenses were of the same substrate material, manufacturing process and
131 manufacturer (Minghao Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd.). The visual acuity chart was an international
132 standard one, and the recorded values were converted to the logarithm of the minimum angle of
133 resolution (LogMAR).

134 **Statistical analysis**

135 Before study initiation, we calculated the necessary sample size to ensure feasibility, we recruited
136 30 volunteers to observe the resolution limit of discernible change in spherical power. The mean
137 resolution limit of change in spherical power was 0.05 ± 0.01 . The test level was 0.05 and the test power
138 was 0.80, 110 volunteers were needed based on the following sample size calculation formula .
139 (δ =allowable error, α =inspection level, σ =standard deviation)

$$140 \quad N = \left(\frac{Z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}} \sigma}{\delta} \right)^2 \quad (5)$$

141 SPSS 20.0 (IBM, Armonk NY) statistical software was used for analysis. Statistical significance was
142 set at $p \leq 0.05$. For continuous variables, data are presented as mean \pm SD. Distributional normality was
143 tested between different groups. The single-sample t-test was used to compare the theoretically derived
144 resolution limit and the actual resolution, and the paired t-test was used to test the comparison of the
145 spherical equivalent prescription and corrected visual acuity.

146 **Patient and public involvement**

147 No patients or the public were involved in the study protocol design, the specific aims or the
148 research questions, and the plans for the design or implementation of the current study. No patients or
149 the public were involved in the interpretation of the results of the study or prepa-
150 ration of the manuscript. There are no plans to disseminate the results of the research to study
151 participants.

152 **Results**

153 **The theoretically derived resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens change**

154 When the total diopter of a human eye was 60.00D, the diameter of cone cell of $3 \mu\text{m}^{[4]}$, and pupil
155 diameter of 4 mm, they were substituted into Formula (4). The theoretically derived resolution limit
156 was 0.05D, and the manufacturing interval of new spherical-power trial case lenses in clinical
157 validation was set at 0.05D.

158 **Clinical validation of the theoretically derived resolution limit of human eye to spherical lens**
 159 **change**

160 As shown in Table 1, a total of 119 volunteers were enrolled in this study, with an average age of
 161 23.7±2.3 years. The probability of achieving red-green balance when the spherical power was adjusted
 162 at an interval of 0.25D was much lower than that when the spherical power was adjusted at 0.05D.

163 Table 1 Basic information of included volunteers

	Right eye	Left eye
Gender		
Male		48
Female		71
Age	23.7±2.3	
Red-green balance rate of the spherical power adjusted at an interval of 0.25D	17.6% (21 eyes)	12.6% (15 eyes)
Red-green balance rate of the spherical power adjusted at an interval of 0.05D	84% (100 eyes)	84% (100 eyes)

164

165 The resolution limit that volunteers can resolve is shown in Table 2. Since the volunteers were
 166 myopic, increasing the diopter of spherical power from the point of equal clarity was equivalent to
 167 undercorrection, and the volunteers were required to observe whether the red optotypes became clearer.
 168 Whereas, decreasing the diopter of spherical power from the point of equal clarity was equivalent to
 169 overcorrection, and the volunteers were required to observe whether the green optotypes became
 170 clearer. It can be seen from the results that there is no difference between the theoretically derived
 171 value and the actual resolution when the diopter of spherical power is increased, but of difference when
 172 the diopter of spherical power is decreased. The right eye (t=-4.206, P=0.000) and left eye (t=-2.993,
 173 P=0.003) were more likely to detect the changes in the diopter of spherical power on a red background.

174 Table 2 Limit of discernible change in spherical power

	Actual resolution (D)	Theoretically derived value (D)	t	p
Increase in diopter of spherical power (undercorrection)				
Right eye	0.05±0.01	0.05	-1.679	0.096
Left eye	0.05±0.02	0.05	-0.911	0.364
Decrease in diopter of spherical power (overcorrection)				

Right eye	0.06±0.04	0.05	3.336	0.001
Left eye	0.06±0.03	0.05	2.334	0.021

175

176 As shown in Table 3, 98.3% of the right eyes in volunteers could resolve the changes in 0.05D of
 177 spherical power with the addition of the spherical power and 78.9% with the decrease of the spherical
 178 power; and 96.7% of the left eyes could resolve the changes in 0.05D of spherical power with the
 179 addition of spherical power and 83.2% with the decrease of spherical power.

180 Table 3 Distribution of the resolution limits for changes in the actually resolved diopter of spherical
 181 power

	OD		OS	
	Increase in spherical lenses (%)	Decrease in spherical lenses (%)	Increase in spherical lenses (%)	Decrease in spherical lenses (%)
0.025D	16 (13.4%)	16 (13.4%)	19 (16.0%)	19 (16.0%)
0.05D	101 (84.9%)	78 (65.5%)	96 (80.7%)	80 (67.2%)
0.10D	1 (0.8%)	22 (18.5%)	2 (1.7%)	17(14.3%)
0.15D	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)
0.20D	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
0.25D	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)
Total	119 (100.0%)	119 (100.0%)	119 (100.0%)	119 (100.0%)

182

183 Table 4 shows the prescription spherical equivalent and corrected visual acuity when the spherical
 184 power are adjusted at intervals of 0.25D and 0.05D. The 0.25D group was undercorrected, and the
 185 spherical equivalent and corrected visual acuity were significantly lower than those in the 0.05D group.

186 Table 4 Prescription and corrected visual acuity for adjusting spherical power at 0.25D and 0.05D

		at an interval of 0.25D	at an interval of 0.05D	t	p
Spherical equivalent (D)	Right eye	-3.50±1.54	-3.59±1.55	9.656	<0.001
	Left eye	-3.23±1.67	-3.31±1.67	7.978	<0.001
BCVA (LogMAR)	Right eye	-0.02±0.06	-0.04±0.07	6.729	<0.001
	Left eye	-0.04±0.06	-0.07±0.06	8.825	<0.001

187

188 **Discussion**

189 In 1865, the diopter was defined as the unit of optometry (at 1D interval) at an international
190 ophthalmology conference in Heidelberg^[7]. In 1900, the trial lenses at an interval of 0.25D appeared,
191 greatly improving the effect of rectifying ametropia with eyeglasses. With the popularization of resin
192 lens and computer numerical control (CNC) free-form surface machining, the machining accuracy of
193 lens has been greatly improved from that 100 years ago and we can produce lenses at intervals of less
194 than 0.25D nowadays.

195 Optometry aims to determine the lens power needed to achieve the BCVA. This power is defined by
196 forming a circle of least confusion (COLC) in the macula, so it depends critically on the focusing
197 accuracy of optical lens and the subject's ability to identify test-objects of different clarities. The
198 diopter value of ametropia is a continuous variable and the subjective optometry is to simulate the
199 continuous variable by inserting trial lenses with different powers into a trial frame. When the diopter
200 value is reached, the external parallel rays of light entering the eye form a COLC, thereby obtaining the
201 BCVA. COLC cannot be formed in case of any difference between the variable and the power of
202 inserted lenses, so the BCVA also depends on the resolution limit of discernible change in lens power.
203 If the difference is less than the resolution limit, the BCVA will be obtained properly; otherwise,
204 inaccurate value may be obtained. Therefore, adjusting the combination of trial lenses per resolution
205 limit is relatively conducive to obtaining the BCVA.

206 The normal visual acuity changes with diameters of cone cells and pupils^[8,9]. With the same optical
207 model, we derive the formula for calculating the resolution limit of discernible change in spherical
208 power. The diameters of cone cells in human eyes range from 0.5 μm to 4 μm ^[10], and the pupil
209 diameter ranges from 2 mm to 4 mm^[11]; in daytime, so the resolution limit theoretically ranges from
210 0.01D to 0.12 D. In this study, the cone cell diameter was assumed to be 3 μm and the pupil diameter
211 was 4 mm, thereby the resolution limit obtained was 0.05 D. If the cell diameter remains unchanged (3
212 μm) and the pupil diameter changes from 3 mm to 4.5 mm, the resolution limit fluctuates between 0.06
213 D and 0.04 D.

214 When the COLC is formed by focusing on a test-object on monochrome background, it is often
215 difficult to identify the change in test-object clarity due to lack of reference object. In 1927, Brown
216 devised the red-green Duochrome test to solve the problem, which has been an important step of the
217 SOP for optometry since 1950s^[12-14]. For subjective optometry, the ideal result is that the visible light
218 centered at a wavelength of about 570 nm is exactly focused on the retina, and the black characters on
219 the red and green backgrounds should have the same clarity when the broad-band visible light passing
220 through the corrective lens is focused on the retina^[15,16]. In this study, to obtain more reliable results,
221 the red-green balance test was used to assist volunteers in identifying changed clarity of the test-object
222 after adjusting the spherical power.

223 As shown in Table 2, the theoretical resolution limit is in good agreement with the actually
224 discernible diopter on the red background. Although the difference is only 0.01D, a significant
225 difference is found between the theoretical resolution limit and the actually discernible diopter on the
226 green background, which is related to the subjective preference of patients, which affects the results of

227 the red-green balance test^[17 18]. Study suggests that red test-object is easier to be perceived than green
228 one^[19 20], so the background color also affects the activity of visual cortex. As shown in Table 3, more
229 than 95% of people can discern a 0.05D change in spherical power on the red background, and about
230 80% of people can discern a 0.05D change in spherical power on the green background, which are
231 consistent with the theoretical results. The discernible resolution limits of 13-16% volunteers are less
232 than 0.05D, which may be attributed to their smaller cone cell diameter or larger pupil diameter.

233 As shown in Table 4, the spherical equivalent and the BCVA of left and right eyes in the 0.25 D
234 interval group are significantly lower than those in the 0.05 D interval group and under correction. The
235 situation can be attributed to the fact that the 0.25 D interval group could only set the minimum diopter
236 achieving clear red test-object as the prescribed diopter when the red-green balance cannot be achieved.

237 The factors affecting the results of red-green balance test include eye accommodation, patients'
238 subjective preferences, cataract, pupil size and ambient brightness^[21-23]. Our study shown that only
239 17.6% of right eyes and 12.6% of left eyes can achieve the red-green balance when spherical power is
240 adjusted at an interval of 0.25D. These volunteers with cataract, abnormal pupil and other
241 abnormalities had been excluded before test. After adjustment of the interval to 0.05D, the red-green
242 balance rate of both eyes increasing to 84% in the same experimental environment indicates that the
243 adjustment interval of spherical power is critical to the red-green balance. As shown in Table 2, the
244 change in spherical power to turn clear test-object on red background to that on green background is
245 about 0.11D. Accordingly, it is difficult to achieve the red-green balance by adjusting the spherical
246 power at an interval of 0.25D, unless the power achieving red-green balance is an integral multiple of
247 0.25D. Liu et al.^[24] carried out a study on necessity of red-green balance test in subjective optometry
248 and found there was no difference in results between the patients subject to red-green balance test and
249 those free from the test. However, the spherical power was adjusted at an interval of 0.25D and
250 different results may be obtained if the red-green balance rate is improved by adjusting the spherical
251 power at an interval of 0.05D.

252 The major limitations of this study are that we only observed the short-term influence of different
253 intervals on corrected visual acuity during optometry, so we will continue to explore the long-term
254 influence of eyeglasses made with optometry prescription obtained by adjusting spherical power at an
255 interval of 0.05D on binocular balance, wearing comfort and myopia progression as there is evidence
256 that full correction are beneficial for myopia control than under correction^[2 25 26].

257 In summary, this study is the first one that deduce theoretically and verify the resolution limit of
258 human eye to spherical lens change. The results show that different intervals of trial lens significantly
259 influence the results of the refraction and Duochrome test. The 0.05 D interval group produces a more
260 accurate refraction and a better visual acuity, which is linked to a higher rate of red-green balance. This
261 study provides a great potential for future improvement of refractive error correction related
262 technologies and products.

263

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322

323 Figure Legend

324

325 Figure 1. The optical model of minimum limit of discernible change in spherical powe

326

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331 **Author Contributions** All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material

332 preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by [Zhen Yi], [Gao Jie] and [Dai Yun]. The

333 first draft of the manuscript was written by [Zhen Yi] and all authors commented on previous versions

334 of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

335 **Disclaimer** The sponsor or funding organisation had no role in the design or conduct of this research.

336 **Patient consent** Obtained.

337 **Ethics Approval**

338 This study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was granted

339 by the Ethics Committee of Beijing Tongren Hospital B (2019/05/30, TRECKY2018-028).”

340 **Consent to participate**

341 Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

342

343

Figures

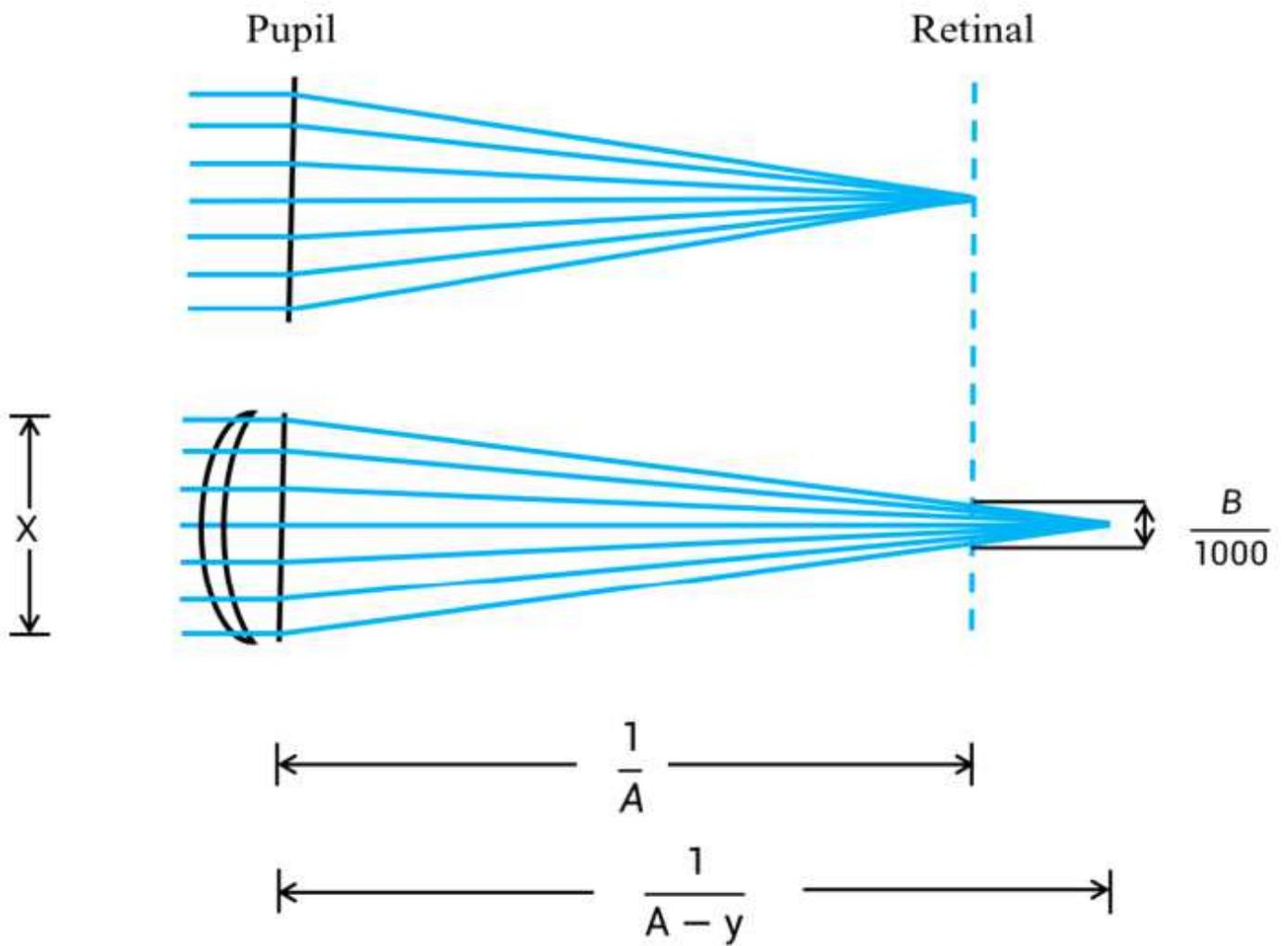


Figure 1

The optical model of minimum limit of discernible change in spherical power