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Newsletter from the Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 531313 Henderson, NV 89053
<http://www.eyesight.org>

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PROMOTING EYE CARE by LEE BOWMAN

Ventura County Star - June 6, 2006

"We try to eat healthy for the sake of our hearts, our bones, etc. Now a new study suggests that how we eat may also influence our risk for developing MD.

It appears that the quality of carbohydrates consumed over time makes a difference in the odds of developing the disease that affects central vision. The problem is caused by the gradual breakdown of light-sensitive cells in the region of the retina called the macula.

A team led by Allen Taylor, who directs research on nutrition and vision at the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston, found that women who ate a diet rich in "high-glycemic index" foods, or carbs that are converted more rapidly to blood sugar, are at higher risk than women eating mainly "low-glycemic-index" foods. So, a diet heavy on white bread and french fries is considered "high-glycemic," while one getting carbs from foods like lentils and yams is considered "low-glycemic."

The scientists looked at a subgroup of the long-term Nurses Health Study at Harvard, focusing on vision and nutrition. More than 500 women from the study, ages 53 to 73, underwent eye exams that looked for early signs of MD. Researchers also scrutinized participants' diets, based on surveys the women had completed periodically over the previous 10 years.

'The likelihood of having abnormalities characteristic of MD during the eye exams more than doubled for women who consumed diets with the highest glycemic index, regardless of other factors known or suspected to increase

the risk of AMD, such as age, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking and obesity,' Taylor said.

Taylor said his team is studying the role of blood sugar in age-related diseases like MD 'because evidence suggests that problems with glucose metabolism, as in diabetes, may cause damaging byproducts to accumulate in sensitive tissues and contribute to disease. The research, published in the April issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, is just a small, first-time look at the possible link', Taylor cautions. He said, 'it's possible that the high-glycemic diet is just a marker for an overall diet and lifestyle pattern that increases MD risk, rather than a direct cause.'

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TIPS FOR LIVING INDEPENDENTLY WITH A VISION LOSS

- * Many people do not know that a large-print checkbook is available at most banks.
- * Most gas companies will come to your home and provide labels on appliances for visually impaired customers.
- * Most phone companies provide a free information service and dialing of that number if you provide them with a note from your Eye Doctor stating you are legally blind.

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NEUROTECH INITIATES A PHASE II CLINICAL TRIAL OF NT-501 FOR THE TREATMENT OF DRY MACULAR DEGENERATION

Lincoln, RI and Paris, France, January 5, 2006 - Neurotech, a biotechnology company specializing in the development of sight-saving innovative therapeutics for chronic retinal diseases, announced the initiation of a Phase II clinical trial of NT-501, The Company's lead Encapsulated Cell Technology (ECT) product for the treatment of visual loss associated with the dry form of macular degeneration.

NT-501 is an intraocular, polymer implant containing human retinal epithelial cells genetically modified to secrete Ciliary Neurotrophic Factor (CNTF). The

implant is designed to continuously release CNTF directly in the eye to the diseased retinal tissue for sustained periods of time. The Phase II trial is a randomized, double-masked, sham- controlled dose ranging study that will evaluate the efficacy and safety of the CNTF implant and will be conducted at the National Eye Institute (NEI) in Bethesda, Maryland.

"Dry MD is a form of retinal disease that needs serious attention and we are very pleased to begin the Phase II trial for the indication,' stated Ted Danse, CEO of Neurotech. "We believe the improvement in visual acuity observed in our Phase I trial will translate into a similar benefit for patients with advanced stage dry MD."

An open-label Phase I clinical trial of NT-501 was conducted in patients with retinitis pigmentosa (RP) by Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., at the National Eye Institute. Dr. Sieving presented the results last November at the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the results confirmed that CNTF can be safely delivered into the vitreous of patients with RP. The ECT implants were well tolerated by the RP patients, and some patients experienced improvement in their visual acuity score.

According to Dr. Sieving, "the results from the Phase I trial have encouraged us to study NT-501 in patients with atrophic MD affecting their central vision, a type of degeneration that is similar to that seen in the late stage RP patients enrolled in the Phase I study". Contact information: Carney Duntsch cduntsch@burnsmc.com (212) 213-0006.

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CAN YOUNGER PEOPLE GET MACULAR DEGENERATION?

http://www.ahaf.org/macular/about/ma_RealLifeQuestions.htm

Yes. Early onset macular degeneration (birth to age 7) is a genetic disease. It is called Best disease or vitelliform macular degeneration. Middle onset macular degeneration (age 5 to 20) is also a genetic disorder. This is commonly called Stargardt's disease, fundus flavimaculatus, or macular dystrophy. Finally, people in their thirties or forties can develop a form of the disease that is also inherited. It may be called Sorsby's dystrophy, Behr's dystrophy, Doyne's dystrophy, or honeycomb dystrophy. Finally, myopic

macular degeneration can occur in people who are severely near-sighted due to extreme elongation of the eyeball. This condition can result in tears in the macula and bleeding beneath the retina.

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DATING 4 DISABLED

Dating4Disabled.com is an online community which offers personal blogs, discussion forums, private chat, a dating service and more. This growing community has become a gathering place for the international special needs population, home to members from over 15 countries world-wide. It is a place for people of all nationalities, backgrounds and life-challenges to share, connect and just be heard. This site is aimed at facilitating social, personal and romantic development in a supportive and understanding environment. It's a fun way to meet new people, make new friends, and hopefully find a partner for life. Membership is free, easy and non-committal. Just click on the link above, create a profile, and you are ready to go.

Come join our chats, forums and blogs at dating4disabled.com. Our free online community is a place for people of all nationalities, backgrounds and life-challenges to share, connect and just be heard. Whether you are looking for support, networking, friendship, a date or marriage, dating4disabled.com provides tools to enable the creation of all types of relationships.
www.dating4disabled.com

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OPTOTABS THE SUPPLEMENT OF CHOICE

We appreciate the support many of our subscribers have provided to the Macular Degeneration Foundation by the purchase of the OPTOTABS

formula. This supplement provides the formula identified by the National Institute of Health as high-level antioxidant and also includes lutein and zeaxanthin which have been found beneficial in later studies. To order this product on line go to www.optogon.com or call 1-800-924-4393.

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CONTACTING MDF

To speak to a support representative directly, you may call 1-888-633-3937. If you reach our voice mail, please speak slowly and distinctly.

ORDERING BOOKS & TAPES

When purchasing items from Amazon.com, please remember to use the MDF search box located at <http://www.eyesight.org/Books/books.html> . By simply originating your search from our website, Amazon rewards the Foundation with a small commission from each product you order. Thank you.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please make checks payable to Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 531313, Henderson, Nevada 89053, or you may use your credit card on our web site <http://www.eyesight.org/Donations/donations.html> . Your contributions make our services available as a support system for macular degeneration patients in the following ways:

1. We provide toll-free lines for personal contact assistance.
2. We mail brochures and other printed materials upon request.
3. We support an award-winning web site that provides the latest up-to-date information.
4. We fund research proposal grants to provide therapies for both the wet and dry form of AMD. Contributions marked "research" are used 100% for research.

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MDF was founded in 1992 by Edmund J. Aleksandrovich Ph.D (a victim of macular degeneration). It provides MD patients and their families with the information necessary to understand the disease, the latest news concerning ways to cope with the disease, and supports the efforts of researchers to find a cure.