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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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MODEST DIETARY ZINC SUPPLEMENTS UNLIKELY TO
INCREASE THE RISK OF "FREE ZINC"

By Liz Trauernicht, President MDF

Recently several sites found "on-line" published an article "Zinc May Be Behind Age-Related Macular Degeneration".

This article initiated my call directly to Dr. Christopher Fredrickson, one of the scientists involved in the study. Dr. Fredrickson described the potentially troublesome zinc found in the drusen of the AMD eye as "free zinc". Free zinc in solution "sticks" on things and is believed to be a factor causing plaque to form in the brain. In the eye, the same free zinc mechanism could contribute to AMD by triggering drusen formation. Researchers are developing methodologies and drugs to capture this mobilized zinc in an effort to slow the degenerative process.

The first question I asked Dr. Fredrickson was about the AREDS formula containing 80mgs of zinc and the effect it would have on "free zinc" in the eye. Dr. Fredrickson said, "Dietary supplements with zinc will probably not increase the concentration of 'free zinc' in the eye." He also stated, "likewise, the zinc in the foods we eat will not have much effect on the free zinc in the eye".

The article states, " Researchers at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) and the Galveston-based spin-off Neurobiotex, Inc. found high levels of zinc in deposits in the eye, which are an indication of AMD". "An early sign and a presumed

trigger of the eye disease is the formation of microscopic plaques, called 'drusen,' in the eye. Exactly what these plaque-like drusen do and why they form is not yet fully understood. They have discovered that the drusen in the eyes of those with AMD have very high levels of Zinc."

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A NEW LENS BEING DEVELOPED FOR MD PATIENTS

From the University of New Mexico -- Karen Wentworth, Media Contact

"When age-related macular degeneration began to destroy his wife's vision, Physics and Astronomy Professor Emeritus McAllister H. Hull, began looking for a solution. The result is a new technology that adds refractive properties to eyeglass lenses and redirects light to improve the central vision for people affected by the disease. Select University Technologies, Inc. (SUTI) has now licensed the technology from STC.UNM, the technology transfer arm of UNM. SUTI will develop the technology through MacVision Corporation. "MacVision is an innovative technology, that will positively impact the quality of life for those suffering with macular degeneration," Fred Rogers, SUTI president, said.

Hull will continue to work with SUTI to refine, science and develop a final product for commercialization. The lenses will be sold through optometrists. STC President & CEO Lisa Kuuttilla said, "We are excited about the prospect of this product becoming available to people with macular degeneration. It is a technology with direct and immediate benefit to the public."

Age-related macular degeneration is a disease affecting more than 2 million Americans. The disease damages the light sensitive retina and causes a blind spot in the central field of vision. The disease profoundly affects the lives of those who have it, claiming their ability to drive or to recognize the faces of friends and family.

The usual current means to compensate for the effects is hyper magnification. MacVision reflects light into the portion of the retina unaffected by the disease to compensate for the loss in the central vision field.”

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LUCENTIS AND AVASTIN: MD PATIENTS ARE STILL CONFUSED

Lucentis, a new eye injection therapy for the wet form of MD, was FDA approved in June of 2006. Genentech was aware of the benefits of Avastin as a drug for cancer and Avastin had been FDA approved for cancer therapy. However, Genentech felt a smaller molecule would be more effective in treating the eye. Therefore, they brought the drug Lucentis (based on the compound, Avastin) to the drug market. For more information about Lucentis call 1-866-582-3684

Before Lucentis was FDA approved, Avastin (used as an off-label drug) became widely used and was viewed by many retinal specialists as a successful treatment for the wet form of MD. Reportedly, it is still the preferred treatment by some retinal specialists and is used for patients that cannot afford Lucentis or the co-pay for Lucentis.

Lucentis has a comprehensive support program for drug assistance. The toll-free number is 1-866-724-9394. If you would like a full report on recent news articles, please call our toll-free number 1-888-633-3937 and ask for a copy to be mailed to your physical address.

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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.

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