



The Magnifier

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WHAT IS MACULAR DYSTROPHY?

When Glenn Beck, the radio and TV talk-show host, tearfully announced that he's losing his eyesight because of a disease called macular dystrophy, questions were flying! What is macular dystrophy? How is it different from macular degeneration? The simplest explanation is this: macular dystrophy is inherited and macular degeneration is age-related. Beck may never fully go blind. But as the degenerative disease progresses, he may lose the ability to read, recognize faces, drive and make out other fine details. Macular dystrophy, as with its close cousin, macular degeneration, leaves intact the peripheral vision.

Macular Degeneration Foundation

P.O. Box 531313
Henderson, NV 89053

Website:
www.eyesight.org

Telephone:
1-888-633-3937

ELECTRONIC READING AID

Low vision presents a multitude of problems and reading small print is one of them. The Electronic Reading Aid allows the user to view greatly magnified pictures and text right on the TV screen. The device is about the size of a computer mouse (3" x 5") and connects directly to your TV or a monitor. It is perfect for books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

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- * freeze frame and de-freeze
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EXELL-CENTER: BONE MARROW STEM CELLS FOR MACULAR DEGENERATION

Macular patients are treated by implanting the stem cells behind the eye via retrobulbar injection under local anesthesia. These re-injected stem cells have the potential to transform into multiple types of cells and are capable of regenerating damaged tissue.

The researchers believe that the retrobulbar injection of autologous stem cells might first prevent the progression of dry and wet macular degeneration by reducing the drusen deposits in the retinal pigment epithelium beneath the macula. It might also prevent the destruction of the photoreceptors in both the dry and wet type, by reactivating proper micro-vessel activity and reducing the abnormal blood vessel growth beneath.

DAY ONE: Bone marrow is collected from the patient's iliac crest (hip bone) using thin-needle minipuncture under local anesthesia. Although some pain is felt when the needle is inserted, most patients do not find the bone marrow collection procedure particularly painful. The entire procedure normally takes about 30 minutes. Once the bone marrow collection is complete, patients may return to their hotel and go about normal activities. Patients who receive general anesthesia must lie down for a short recovery period before returning to their hotel.

DAY TWO: The stem cells are processed from the bone marrow in a state-of-the-art, government approved (cGMP) laboratory.

DAY THREE: The stem cells are implanted back into the patient via retrobulbar injection by an experienced ophthalmologist. Retrobulbar means "behind the eye" and therefore the stem cells are implanted into the space behind the eyeball by inserting a small needle under the bottom of the eye. The needle is then guided into the retrobulbar space. Once the needle is in the correct position, the stem cells are injected. Retrobulbar injection can be performed under local or general anesthesia.

Contact information: Phone: 1 866 680 8202 Fax: 1 713 583 9322

Cost: The price for the treatment is 10.545 Euros.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE RECENTLY FDA APPROVED IMPLANTABLE TELESCOPE

FDA approval is only the first step.

There is still much to be done before patients can apply for this procedure.

- * This \$35,000 procedure is not yet covered by Medicare
- * The candidate for this procedure must have already lost all central vision
- * Specialists will need to be trained to do the procedure
- * The patient must have training before and after the implant

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADA

July 26 was the 20th anniversary of the Americans

with Disabilities Act. The act defines when a vision impairment is an issue, what types of “reasonable accommodations” employees may require, and how an employer can prevent harassment of employees with visual disabilities or any other disability. If you or someone you know with vision loss is starting a new career or regularly employed, use these employment and workplace adaptations to make sure you understand all of the options available. For more information go to www.visionaware.org



VisionAware is a “Self-Help for Vision Loss” web site that includes Questions & Answers on a wide range of topics, including eye diseases and disorders, home management, home modification, reading and writing, personal care and grooming, recreational activities, crafts, braille, computers and technology, and helpful services and resources.

TOURS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

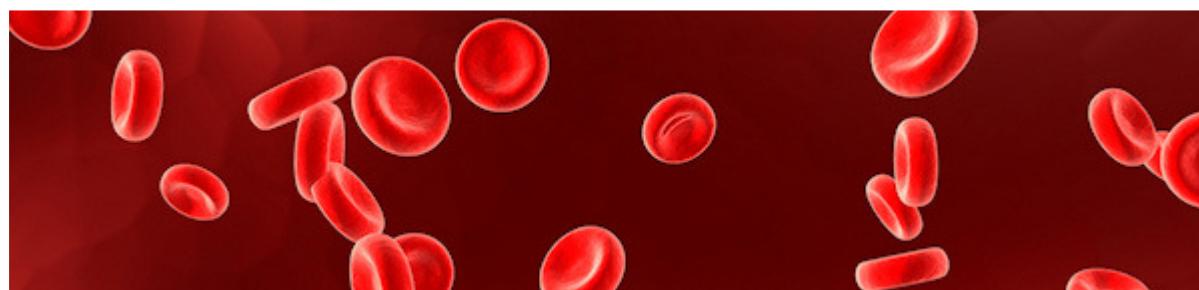
If you are searching for a way to travel safely and would like to be part of a tour, you may call MIND'S EYE TRAVEL. For information, call (207) 542-4438 or visit www.mindseyetravel.com

LINK BETWEEN IRON OVERLOAD AND MACULAR DEGENERATION

June 24, 2010 Health & Medicine

Researchers at the Medical College of Georgia are pursuing a link between hemochromatosis, which results in iron overload, and the wet form of macular degeneration. They suspect that too much iron, known to wreak cumulative havoc on the body's organs, hastens normal aging of the eyes.

If they are correct, avoiding the most severe consequences of a disease that robs the central vision could be as simple as donating blood a couple times annually to reduce iron levels, said Dr. Vadivel Ganapathy, Chairman of the MCG School of Medicine Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology



The eyes need light to see and the body needs iron to deliver oxygen but the price of “too much of a good thing” is increased oxidative stress, Ganapathy said. An excess of iron

and light in the retina creates oxygen radicals that can destroy tissue down to the DNA.

Light alone takes a slow toll on the retina, which converts it into electrical impulses sent to the brain via the optic nerve. This is despite multiple built-in safeguards such as filters in the cornea and lens that protect against the most harmful rays, like ultraviolet light, and a yellow pigment that provides extra protection for the most central point of vision. Retinal pigmented epithelial cells, which nourish sight-enabling cells in the retina, help gobble up and dump any resulting tissue trash into the circulation for elimination. Leftovers show up as fatty, yellow deposits called drusen. Everyone experiences some age-related vision changes and accumulation of harmless levels of drusen, Nussbaum said.

But when byproducts start accumulating under the retinal pigment epithelium, the risk increases for the wet form of macular degeneration in which fragile new blood vessels grow underneath the retina, leak and cloud vision. The question is why some people's condition worsens.

"We see it in one patient and it may stay that way for 20 years. We see it in another patient and within five years their vision has functionally started to decrease," said Dr. Emory Patterson, an MCG School of Medicine graduate completing his ophthalmology residency at MCG who is helping with the clinical study.

GENZYME INTRODUCES PHASE 1 CLINICAL TRIAL FOR EYE DISEASES

<http://www.technologyreview.com/biomedicine/25810/>

GENE THERAPY: A small clinical trial with only 3 patients will use a gene therapy designed to treat the wet form of macular degeneration. This drug, officially called AAV2-sFLT01, would insinuate itself into the patient's retinal cell to produce the same VEGF-binding protein as Lucentis. This therapy has the potential to last far longer than an injection of an ANTI-VEGF compound, possibly up to several years. Preliminary results should be available in about a year.

POSITIVE THINKING AND TENACITY: TOOLS FOR SUCCESS!

Original article By Eric Louie, Contra Costa Times

Losing vision to Macular Degeneration presents enormous challenges to those that are considered "legally blind". However, central vision obstruction did not render these two women unable to compete in a recent art contest. This is a story of hope and success based on sheer attitude and tenacity.

It's true, Virginia Macky and Gloria Smith could not drive, and needed help for tasks around the house, but that didn't stop these two members of the Danville Women's Club from taking top prizes (one for painting and another for sculpture) in this year's California Federation of Women's Clubs Statewide Art Contest.

Macky was diagnosed with macular degeneration in 1994 and Smith was diagnosed in 2002. Gloria Smith won first place for advanced water color portrait. Smith confesses, "I can't see how much paint is on the brush, which is one of the biggest things." Virginia Macky made a paper-mache sculpture of her children's former dog, Mot. She learned the craft last year in a class at a community center. "We still do everything," said Macky . . . "I don't let (my eyesight) stop me."

The women competed with many other contestants to reach the state level. Ania Carr, a district official, said the judges (artists who were not in the club) did not know the women were legally blind. Neither did the state judges, who picked the winners during the statewide convention.

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.

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>. 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.