



THE MAGNIFIER

Macular Degeneration Foundation
P.O. Box 531313
Henderson, Nevada 89053

FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND

Macular
Degeneration
Foundation

The Magnifier

ISSUE #85

Oct-Dec 2011



Self-Help Guide

People who are in the intermediate to late stage of vision loss may consider making the transition from visual to nonvisual practices in some daily activities.

A free guide is available from MD Support that features a self evaluation of 21 personal daily living activities.

It is available for download at www.mdsupport.org/guide.pdf



Can taking aspirin daily lead to vision loss?

Researchers led by Dr. Paulus de Jong at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience and Academic Medical Center collected health and lifestyle information from nearly 4,700 people over age 65.

The results showed that seniors who take aspirin daily have twice the risk of having wet macular degeneration than people who never take the pain reliever.

The results of aspirin use does not apply to the dry form but only the wet form of the eye condition, caused by leaking blood vessels in the eye, which leads to vision loss in the center of the eye's field of vision.

Paulus wrote in an email that his team "analyzed as meticulously as possible" whether cardiovascular disease might have influenced the results, and still found that aspirin users - regardless of their heart health - are at a greater risk of the more serious type of vision loss. While it's a good idea to caution people that aspirin might have a deleterious role in macular degeneration, "a healthy eye with full visual capacities is of no use in a dead body," Paulus said.

In other words, for people with cardiovascular disease who take aspirin to prevent the condition from worsening, the benefits of the drug outweigh the risks to visual health.

VEGF TRAP-EYE HAS FDA APPROVAL

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is pleased to announce that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved EYLEA™ (aflibercept) Injection, known in the scientific literature as VEGF Trap-Eye, for the treatment of patients with neovascular (wet) Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) at a recommended dose of 2 milligrams (mg) every four weeks (monthly) for the first 12 weeks, followed by 2 mg every 8 weeks (2 months).

The VEGF Trap-Eye is a fusion protein that combines features of two different VEGF receptor sites, thus allowing a higher binding affinity than the anti-VEGF drugs currently in clinical use. This molecule has demonstrated efficacy in improving visual acuity and reducing CNV size and OCT thickness in 2 large Phase 3 clinical trials in a direct head-to-head comparison with Lucentis.

Clinical Trial Information

Call the National
Eye Institute at:

800-411-1222 or
301-496-5248

www.nei.nih.gov

2012 Meeting Information

Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology Meeting
Sept 9th – 11th

Envision Low Vision Conference
Sept 12th - 15th
St. Louis MO

American Academy of Optometry Meeting
Oct 24th – 27th
Phoenix AZ

American Academy of Ophthalmology Meeting
Nov 10th – 13th
Chicago IL

Possible Side Effect From LUCENTIS Warrants Further Investigation

Mon, Oct 24, 2011
ROCHESTER, Minn.

Two major drug trials conclude there was little risk from a drug aimed at age-related macular degeneration. Yet a Mayo Clinic ophthalmologist, Sophie Bakri, M.D., began to note something concerning in some of her patients: an increase in pressure inside the eye. Intraocular pressure (IOP) is a measure of fluid pressure inside the eye. Measured in millimeters of mercury (mm/Hg), IOP that is higher than normal or above baseline (higher than 21 mm/Hg) can indicate glaucoma.

"I was treating patients and measuring pressures, and I was surprised to see that in some of these people,

their intraocular pressure was higher, and they didn't have a diagnosis of glaucoma," Dr. Bakri says. "So, why did the pressure go up? Was it from the drug itself, or the actual injection? Is this real?"

After reviewing the results of the original MARINA AND ANCHOR clinical study trials presented to the FDA for the approval of Lucentis, Dr. Bakri found what she suspected: a subset of patients had increased IOP. "We still don't know if it goes up because of the drug or the pressure of the repeated monthly injections, or both," she says. The take-home finding: intraocular pressure should be monitored in eyes receiving ranibizumab (Lucentis). "A greater propor-

tion of eyes in the ranibizumab groups had IOP increases regardless of the presence or absence of pre-existing risk factors, such as history of glaucoma, suspicion of glaucoma, ocular hypertension or use of a glaucoma medication," Dr. Bakri says. "Our analysis was surprising because the increase was so prevalent and highly statistically significant," Dr. Bakri says. "Lucentis is an excellent drug that works very well, but if we use a drug, we gain long-term experience, and that's where side effects start showing up.

KeepSight Study Seeks Volunteers

by Dan Roberts

A research group studying a new tool for self-monitoring vision is looking for 1,000 individuals who are affected by dry AMD. Half will monitor their vision with a normal Amsler Grid, and half will maintain a "KeepSight" vision testing diary for one year.

As a thank you gift, participants will receive a pair of wrap-around

Cocoon sunglasses at the end of the study.

The purpose of this project is to understand whether the Keep Sight approach makes a positive difference in how people monitor their vision compared to the Amsler grid. The resulting materials will be free to doctors and patients. The research is supported by the National Eye Institute, with Johns Hopkins and

the Wilmer Eye Institute working alongside.

To receive enrollment information and a sample diary by mail, email your name and postal address to director@mdsupport.org or call (816) 761-7080.

We Appreciate Your Support

Donations

The Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

Please visit our website at eyesight.org to make a tax deductible donation. Checks may be mailed to:

Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.,
P.O. Box 531313,
Henderson, NV 89053

Call: 888-633-3937 (USA)
Call: 702-450-2908 (Intl)
Email: liz@eyesight.org

Organizations That Can Help

National Eye Institute
800-411-1222 or
301-496-5248
www.nei.nih.gov

AMD Alliance
amdalliance.org
416-486-2500
x-7505

Association for Macular Diseases
212-605-3719
macula.org

Foundation Fighting Blindness
888-394-3937
blindness.org

Macular Degeneration Partnership
888-430-9898
amd.org

Prevent Blindness America
800-331-2020
preventblindness.org

Macula Research Foundation
610-668-6705
mrvf.org

Definitions

Ophthalmologist
a practitioner in the medical science of surgery and care of the eye and its related structures. An M.D. degree is required.

Retina specialist
a medical doctor trained as an ophthalmologist, who has received additional training in diseases and surgery of the retina and vitreous.

Optometrist
a degreed (O.D.), independent, primary health care provider skilled in the co-management of eye health and vision care, including examination, diagnosis, treatment, management of diseases/disorders, prescription of eyeglasses/contact lenses, and provision of low vision aids and therapy.

Optician
a person who designs or manufactures ophthalmic appliances or optical instruments ("ophthalmic optician") or deals in prescriptions ("dispensing optician").



Treatment Therapies on the Horizon

Several lines of experimental and clinical evidence indicate that toxic by-products of the visual cycle play a pathophysiological role in the development and progression of both early and late dry AMD.

Visual cycle modulators (VCM's) aim at reducing the accumulation of such toxic compounds in the retinal pigment epithelium and thus at slowing progression of the disease.

Fenretinide by Revision Therapeutics:
a once-daily oral medication for the treatment of Dry AMD. Plans to initiate Phase 3 program.

Acucela's Pipeline
Visual Product: ACU-4429

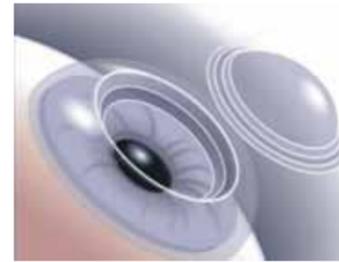
Currently in Phase 2 trials, Acucela is developing orally-delivered VCM therapies for Dry AMD that selectively target cells within the retina.

MacuCLEAR
focuses on the Blood Flow in Dry AMD Patients.

MacuCLEAR's MC-1101 has the ability to restore blood flow by causing vasodilation of the choroid vessels, removing the accumulated waste, and delivering anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative effects.

MC0-1011 uses its novel VersiDoser delivery system which consists of individually packaged drops which can be precisely sized and accurately delivered with a unique eye-dropper dispenser.

MacuCLEAR is ready to initiate Phase 3a efficacy trial. Upon successful conclusion of this trial, the company expects to secure a strategic partnership with a big pharma company to complete a 3b study and bring this drug to market.



Swedish Researchers are Developing a Synthetic Cornea

A study (reported in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*) used bio-synthetic collagen as scaffolding which would allow cells from the patient to grow into the graft so that it would mimic the original tissue.

The two-year preliminary test showed that the biosynthetic corneas restored vision as effectively

as cadaver corneas yet did not require anti-rejection drugs and allowed normal tears to form.

The current trial with only 10 patients (one eye treated in each patient), led by Dr. Per Fagerholm of Linköping University, found after two years no complications developed, and with the use of contact

lenses, vision was as good as with cadaver transplants. Contact lenses are normally used with the latter as well.

This new biosynthetic collagen is produced by FibroGen Inc. of San Francisco, California.

Blindness After Fat Injections

A 32-year-old man presented with vision loss in the left eye.

One week earlier, while under local anesthesia, he had had a fat injection into his forehead for correction of frown lines. The patient reported that while he was receiving the injection, he felt severe eye pain and had complete vision loss in his left eye. The left pupil was dilated,

but the patient's speech and consciousness were normal.

Angiography confirmed multiple retinal hemorrhages. After two months, the patient's vision has not improved.

Young-Hoon Park, M.D.
Kyu Seop Kim, M.D.
Seoul St. Mary's Hospital,
Seoul, South Korea

Zeaxantin and AMD

By Adrian Galbreth

A study carried out by eye nutrition pioneer Stuart Richer, PhD, at Chicago's Veterans Administration Hospital has been able to establish health benefits to elderly citizens consuming Zeaxanthin.

According to the results of the research, entitled the Zeaxanthin and Visual Function (ZVF) Study, there is scientific evidence that proves such a product could enhance the vision of older people when they drive at night.

There are many supplements available that contain Zeaxanthin. For information on eye care supplements with Zeaxanthin call 1-800-924-4393.

“DON’T GIVE UP”

Quotations by Andrew Lock

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor because “he lacked imagination and had no good ideas.”

Disney went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland.

In fact, the proposed park was rejected by the city of Anaheim, California, on the grounds that it would only attract “riff-raff”.

Every cartoon that **Charles Schultz**, creator of the comic strip Peanuts, submitted to the year-book staff at his high school was rejected.

A Letter From The Editor, Liz Trauernicht



“Don’t Give Up!”

Tenacity is the key to success. I know, as a person struggling each day with various low-vision challenges, you are tempted to just sit down and give up.

However, the success stories I hear every week come from the folks that have that certain tenacity that delivers continued success in dealing with each problem as it occurs.

In each struggle to overcome an obstacle you may have living independently, you naturally become stronger and more creative in solving the next challenge. This all

boils down to a few simple phrases we have heard over the years:

1. The impact of a positive attitude and the power of positive thinking.
2. Laughter is the best medicine and actually provides a “high” from endorphins!
3. Do something for yourself and something for someone else each day.
4. Don’t let what may happen tomorrow rob you of the joy you can experience TODAY!

In addition, do what you can do to empower yourself on a personal level. There are several publications available to get you started. In this newsletter is the information for E.A.R.S.

Also available free of charge, MD Support has CD’s and a large print Study Guide with 21 ways

to deal with daily living activities. Call 1-816-761-7080 to get started now.

You may also call 1-888-761-7080 to contact our Resource Consultant, Lee Boncher. She will help you find organizations, services, or agencies in your area that are designed to meet your needs.



The Magnifier would like to give a “Shout Out” to the **Helen Keller Organization** in New York. Lee Boncher, our Resource Consultant, has found them to be incredibly helpful when she has contacted them on behalf of folks needing equipment.

Low Vision Resources ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP

E.A.R.S. is a non-profit public charity, providing free audio cassette lesson tapes that teach adaptive daily living skills to the vision impaired and their care givers.

The lessons, modeled after the current blind rehabilitation techniques, are a must for anyone coping with loss of eyesight. They are committed to teaching the skills necessary to live life with confidence and dignity. Stay Independent! E.A.R.S. is here to tell you how. Call 1-800-843-6816.

Guild for the Blind. Call 312-236-8569 or visit www.guildfortheblind.org for information on classes, support groups and products.

Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology If you are in the Detroit area call 313-824-4710 for classes, support group info, and products.



National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Through a national network of cooperating libraries, NLS administers a free library program of braille and audio materials circulated to eligible borrowers in the United States by postage-free mail.

To receive general information, call 202-707-5100 or 1-888-657-7323 to connect to a local library.

Dr. Joe Fontenot is Director of **Community Service for Vision Rehabilitation** (csvr.org). They are opening a new Low Vision office in the Mississippi region in February ‘12.

See Video: <http://tinyurl.com/79257e4>

Letters to CSVR from grateful recipients of service:

“Thanks to the work of Dr. Fontenot and the CSVR Low Vision work, many folks that could not afford or would not be able to identify devices would still be at a staggering loss dealing with the many visual challenges they have living independently.”

“I would like to express my sincere gratefulness for opening my eyes again. I thought I would never be able to read any newspaper or printed media again. Your foundation has been more than helpful to let me do things that other people take for granted”

Dan Roberts, MD Support organization director, provides monthly presentations for qualifying affiliate support groups. This allows participants to hear the presentation first hand and type in questions to obtain more information. In addition, Dan also provides a telesupport group opportunity for those that cannot be part of an organized support group.

The expenses for this service are generously provided for by **Ellen Troyer, CEO of Biosyntrx**. Biosyntrx offers a superior line of ocular products for most eye-related problems, including Macula Complete, an eye supplement, Bio Tears and Oculair. For more information on their product line please call **1-800-688-6815**.