



## THE MAGNIFIER

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

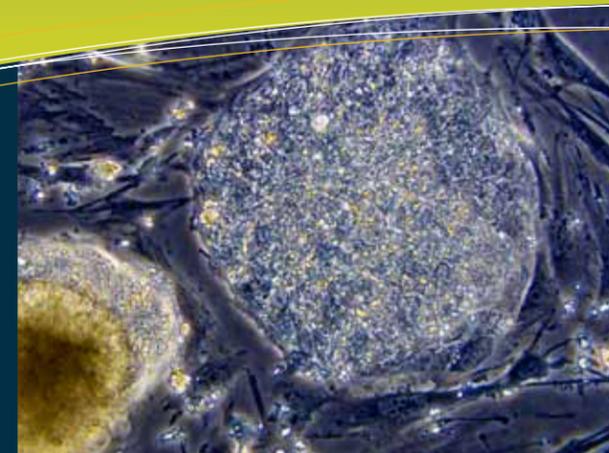
FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND

Macular  
Degeneration  
Foundation

# The Magnifier

ISSUE #87

Apr-Jun 2012



### New Treatment for Dry AMD Using HuCNS Stem Cells

StemCells, Inc. announced that the FDA authorized a Phase I/II clinical trial using stem cells from the brain to prevent degeneration of the macula in dry AMD patients.

This will involve a single injection of the HuCNS cells into the space beneath the retina.

Patients' vision will be evaluated for one year and followed for an additional four years in a separate observational study.

## MacuClear's Latest Press Release

By John Ralston

"We are very pleased to announce that we had a successful End of Phase 2 meeting with FDA on March 26, 2012, and we are proceeding with our Planned Phase 3a human efficacy study. We expect to begin dosing our first of 60 patients as soon as final preparations are completed,

which will be should be completed in a matter of weeks.

We now have a cleared, viable and rational human clinical efficacy trial that will give us an objective opportunity to prove that Dr. Chiou's technology works to prevent the progression of dry AMD. "

NOTE: MacuClear 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.

## A Guide to Using Most Eye Drops

Joe Fontenot MD - Community Services for Vision Rehab.

Most eye drop preparations should be refrigerated. The possibility of bacterial contamination is reduced. It is also much easier to tell if you have properly placed the drops in your eye if they are cold.

Wash your hands before using eye drops.

Place the cap on a clean, dry surface on its side.

Lie down or sit down and tilt your head back as far as possible (don't fall over!)

Pull the inner corner of your lower eyelid down with your free hand.

Without the dropper touching your eye, squeeze one drop onto the lower lid that you have pulled down, then release the lid, letting the drop cover your eye. It is not nec-

essary to use more than one drop, as extra drops run out of the eye and are wasted.



Gently press on the inner corner of your eye. This closes the tear duct that goes from your eye into the back of your nose, preventing the medicine in the drops from irritating your throat or going into your stomach and being absorbed.

Stay in this position for 2-3 minutes, allowing the medication in the drops to be absorbed

You may then wipe your eyes to remove extra tears/liquid

Promptly re-cap the drops and return to the refrigerator.

### Clinical Trial Information

Natl Eye Institute  
800-411-1222 or  
[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)

Clinical trials have guidelines called "inclusion" and "exclusion" criteria. These criteria (age, gender, type and stage of disease, etc.) keep participants safe and ensure researchers will be able to answer the questions they plan to study.

## Resource Consultant

For assistance identifying agencies in a specific area, call

Lee Boncher,  
Resource Consultant

toll free at:  
**1-888-866-6148**

## Resources

NFB Newsline  
866-504-7300

Choice Magazine  
Listening  
888-724-6423

National Library  
Service  
888-657-7273  
(Books on Tape)

Free Low Vision  
Catalogs and  
Independent  
Living Catalog  
888-537-2118

Maxi Aids  
800-522-6294

Enhanced Vision  
888-811-3161

## First Oral Agent To Quell Invasive Macular Degeneration

May 6, 2012 in Ophthalmology

There may be new found hope for patients whose vision is threatened when medicine injected directly into the eyes fails to cause abnormal blood vessels to recede.

While injectable drugs called angiogenesis (an-gee-oh-jen-esis) inhibitors are considered a modern miracle and have become the standard of care for patients with the fast-progressive form of macular degeneration, they are not foolproof. For the first time researchers report that an oral nutraceutical, used on a last resort basis, rapidly restores vision to otherwise hopeless patients who face permanent loss.

Three successfully treated cases were presented at the annual Association For

Research In Vision & Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

One striking case is an 88-year old woman whom retinal specialists said was beyond any help offered by conventional medicines or surgery. The nutraceutical helped this hospitalized woman regain her ability to see faces, read a menu and visualize her handwriting in just four days.

In another case a 75-year old man with failing vision experienced recovery of vision in 5 days and was able to renew his driver's license after taking just 7 nutraceutical capsules.

Stuart Richer OD, PhD, Director, Ocular Preventative Medicine - Eye Clinic, James A. Lovell Federal

Health Care Center, North Chicago, Illinois, says 16 of the first 17 cases responded positively to nutraceutical medicine.

There were no side effects reported. He says it is unknown whether this nutraceutical produces such positive results in the more common dry form of macular degeneration, but the benefit to vision is typically observed in both eyes and is self-evident.

While the nutraceutical used in this report is non-prescription and directly available to patients and could be used alongside injected drugs, Dr. Richer advises physician consultation prior to its use. It still remains unproven until it is evaluated in broader studies.

## An A+ for High-Plus Glasses

by Joe Fontenot MD & Stephanie Montgomery OD  
Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation  
Mobile, Alabama



### WHAT ARE HIGH PLUS GLASSES?

"High Plus" glasses are reading glasses stronger than the usual maximum strength of 3.00 to 3.50 diopters ordinarily available at optical shops, drug stores, and "Dollar Stores". The strength of reading glasses is measured in diopters. A

diopter is the optical power of the lens. **Where can I get high plus glasses?**

High plus glasses may be obtained at your local optical store. Prices are usually low, less than \$20 for the 4.00D to 6.00D glasses, but are higher for strengths greater than 6.00D as these require "base-in prism" to help your eyes work together at such a close working distance. The

4.0 to 6.0 strengths are also available through low vision catalogs or on-line by searching "strong reading glasses".

**Summary:** For many people with macular degeneration, strong or "high-plus" glasses are an inexpensive and useful addition to their aids and devices. Give them a try!

Want more information? **Call CSVr at 251-928-2888.**

## We Appreciate Your Support

### Donations

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

**Please visit our website** at [eyesight.org](http://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](mailto:liz@eyesight.org)**

**Disclaimer - Articles in the Magnifier are for information only and are not an endorsement by the Macular Degeneration Foundation editorial staff.**

## Organizations That Can Help

National Eye Institute  
800-411-1222  
[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)

AMD Alliance  
[amdalliance.org](http://amdalliance.org)  
416-486-2500  
x-7505

Association for Macular Diseases  
212-605-3719  
[macula.org](http://macula.org)

Foundation Fighting Blindness  
888-394-3937  
[blindness.org](http://blindness.org)

MD Partnership  
888-430-9898  
[amd.org](http://amd.org)

Prevent Blindness America  
800-331-2020  
[preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org)

Macula Research Foundation  
610-668-6705  
[mvrf.org](http://mvrf.org)

MD Support  
816-761-7080  
[Mdsupport.org](http://Mdsupport.org)

EARS  
Free Tapes to live life with confidence and dignity.  
800-843-6816

## 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").

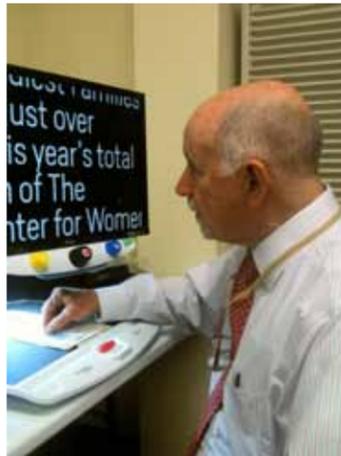
## Dr. Joseph Fontenot Demonstrates Magnified Type on a Computer in Gulfport, MS.

Denise Delatoba, the first patient to be seen in the new Gulfport, Mississippi office, is the type of patient helped by the non-profit Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation.

Delatoba, 49, woke up one morning unable to see out of her left eye. She said an orange-sized tumor in her brain had pressed on her optic nerve and severely impaired her vision.

Her right eye also was affected by the tumor, which has been removed. But she was left with vision problems that the new clinic is helping.

Dr. Joe Fontenot, who started Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation in 2003 in Fairhope,



Dr. Fontenot was a Mobile, Alabama cardiologist from 1974 to 2003.

"In 1988 I developed a congenital form of macular degeneration," he said.

"I continued to practice cardiology, but had to stop doing certain procedures. I actively searched for ways to be able to continue to function. I realized the vast majority of people who have vision loss were not aware of all the things that were available."

In 2003, Dr. Fontenot left his cardiology practice and turned to helping people with low vision. In 2006 he formed the nonprofit, which has seen about 2,000 patients to date.

Alabama, brought the service to Gulfport in March, 2012. The new office is located in the rear of the South Mississippi Planning and Development office at 9229 U.S. 49, Gulfport.

Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation also has offices in Daphne, Mobile and Montgomery, Alabama to help people cope with vision loss. **For more information call 251-928-2888.**

## Easing Eye Strain

One of the ways to relieve eye strain is to wear wrap-around anti-glare glasses. They not only protect your eyes indoors from bright light, TV, and computer glare, but they also serve as a first line of defense from airborne contaminants when outdoors or shopping.

If we fixate on an object, such as a magnifier, newspaper, computer, or TV, it is important not to "stare" too long. We should occasionally get up, walk around, drink water and do some simple eye exercises like rolling our eyes.

For eyewear recommendations, see your optometrist or contact OPTOGON at 1-800-924-4393

## Glaucoma: An Eye Disease Or A Neurologic Disorder?

From the American Academy of Ophthalmology  
Media Release March 6, 2012

A new paradigm to explain glaucoma is rapidly emerging, and it is generating brain-based treatment advances that may ultimately vanquish the disease known as the "sneak thief of sight." A review from the AAO's Ophthalmology Journal reports that some top researchers no longer think of glaucoma solely as an eye disease. Instead, they view it as a neurologic disorder that causes nerve cells in the brain to degenerate and die, similar to what occurs in Parkinson disease and in Alzheimer's.

The review, led by Jeffrey L Goldberg, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of ophthalmology at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Interdisciplinary Stem Cell Institute, describes treatment advances that are either

being tested in patients or are scheduled to begin clinical trials soon. For many years, the prevailing theory was that vision damage in glaucoma patients was caused by abnormally high pressure inside the eye, known as intraocular pressure (IOP).

The new research paradigm focuses on the damage that occurs in a type of nerve cell called retinal ganglion cells which are vital to the ability to see. These cells connect the eye to the brain through the optic nerve. IOP-lowering medications and surgical techniques continue to be effective ways to protect glaucoma patients' eyes and vision. Tracking changes in IOP over time informs the Doctor whether the current treatment plan is working.

## AMD & Family History

From the AAO Newsletter as reported in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, March 2012

This study quantifies the risk associated with family history of AMD by a case-control study of reported family history and also by examining the siblings of AMD cases.

A reported family history was associated with a 12-fold increase in odds for those with an affected sibling and possibly a larger increase in risk with an affected parent.

## Caffeine & Dry Eyes

New research (featured in the Journal of the American Academy of Ophthalmology) could impact treatment of dry eyes.

Researchers at the University of Tokyo's School of Medicine have shown for the first time that caffeine intake can significantly increase the eye's ability to produce tears, a finding that could improve treatment of dry eye syndrome.

This common eye condition affects about four million people age 50 and older in the United States. For many, dry eye syndrome is simply uncomfortable and annoying, but for others it escalates into a vision-threatening disease.

All of the 78 participants in the new study produced significantly more tears after consuming caffeine than after taking a placebo.

## A Letter From The Editor, Liz Trauernicht



### An Outrageous Older Woman

I recently had the pleasure of speaking to an amazing woman, Ruth Harriet Jacobs. Ruth, 86 years young, lives in a retirement center in Massachusetts.

Her life as a World War II reporter, the author of 9 books with a Ph.D. in Geriatrics, and later a volunteer at the Veteran's Hospital, has a life filled with adventure.

She now uses her creative talents to encourage groups to write their individual memoirs. The fact she has

wet macular degeneration has not affected her day-to-day mission to make a difference in the lives she touches. She attributes her spiritual connection as the source of empowerment for her own daily renewal as well as inspiring others. Her book, "Be An Outrageous Older Woman", has been a best seller.

This book is available through the National Library Service/Books On Tape.

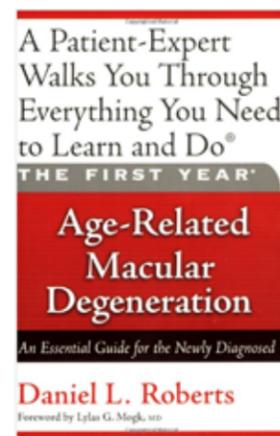
### Don't Give Up!

In the words of Lylas Mogk, M.D.,

**"To meet the challenges and continue living fully with vision loss, we need to be empowered with knowledge about ... patterns of vision loss, creative strategies for coping emo-**

**tionally, techniques and tools for using remaining vision efficiently, information about the spectrum of resources, and support from those who share the experience."**

Dr. Mogk wrote this as a forward in a book by a dear friend, Mr. Dan Roberts. Dan's Book, **"The First Year: Age-Related Macular Degeneration: An Essential Guide for the Newly Diagnosed"** can be ordered on line or by calling 816-761-7080.



## A Portrait of Anna Campbell Bliss

At 86, Anna Campbell Bliss remains one of Utah's cutting-edge artists - passionately experimenting in color and spatial relationships, while probing the intersections of painting, math, language, dance and music. Bliss overcame blindness caused by macular degeneration a few years ago.

She joined the Modernist movement in the late 1940s and was a pioneer in exploring

computer-generated art in the 1980s. Cid Collins Walker, a Washington, D.C., area-based filmmaker and Utah native, directed and produced "Arc of Light: A Portrait of Anna Campbell Bliss." Walker never forgot the impact Bliss had on her life in the 1970s when she lived in Salt Lake City.

Bliss's work can be found at the University of Utah's Nursing Building, the State of Utah's Data Processing

Center on Capitol Hill, St. Thomas Moore Church in Sandy and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



## Hydrating Your Body Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle!



Our bodies are made up of two-thirds water. Water is linked to most of our biological functions, such as regulating body temperature, carrying nutrients and oxygen to all cells in the body, and helping our bodies to excrete waste.

Even moderate dehydration can cause headaches, dizziness, and daytime fatigue. Also drinking 6-8 glasses of water can help to prevent many types of cancer. So drink up!

## Take a Safe Vacation

If you have an eye disease that has greatly compromised your visual acuity, but would love to go on a cruise, you might want to call Jerry or Sharon Crawford at 281-633-2711.

They are taking reservations and deposits for a 5-Day cruise departing Galveston, TX.

Ports of call are Progresso and Cozumel, Mexico. It returns to Galveston on Saturday, January 19th. Inside cabins are \$174.15 and Ocean View cabins are \$184.15.

A great price for a quick and safe get-away!