Genetics and Age-Related Macular Degeneration

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As the populations in the United States and in other industrialized countries age, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is likely to affect a greater number of people in the years and decades ahead. Currently, it is already the leading cause of legal blindness in the U.S., with advanced AMD affecting close to 2 million people. Understanding more about what causes AMD and what factors may change its progression would be very important in the future in addressing this significant health issue. Many basic science and clinical researchers are working on these questions to reduce the negative impact of AMD on the nation’s health.

Many people have heard or read about AMD, or have family members that have been affected...

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Calendar of Events

- **Tuesday, September 8, 2009**
  Low Vision Group, “News from MLK, Jr. Library: Update on Library Resources, Services and Technology,” 11 a.m.
  Washington Hospital Center, Eye Clinic
  110 Irving Street, NW
  Washington, DC 20010
  *Call (202) 877-6081 to reserve lunch. Free parking sticker.*

- **Tuesday, September 8, 2009**
  Low Vision Group, 2 p.m.
  Falcon’s Landing
  20522 Falcon’s Landing Circle
  Potomac Falls, VA 20165 / (703) 404-5151

- **Saturday, September 12, 2009**
  Macular Degeneration Network, “Value of Support Networks: What’s In It For You” 10:30 a.m.
  Patricia Beattie, Social Activist and Public Policy Consultant
  *First Connection Support Group, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m.*
  Sibley Memorial Hospital, Ernst Auditorium
  5255 Loughboro Road, NW
  Washington, DC 20016 / (202) 364-7602

- **Tuesday, September 15, 2009**
  Vision Support Group, “Bifocals, Trifocals: Understanding Your Eyeglasses,” 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
  Friendship Heights Village Center
  4433 Southpark Avenue
  Chevy Chase, MD 20815 / (301) 656-2797
  *Bring a bag lunch. Dessert and beverage provided.*
Calendar of Events

• **Wednesday, September 16, 2009**
  Low Vision Group, 10 a.m.
  Vinson Hall
  6251 Old Dominion Drive
  McLean, VA 22101 / (703) 536-4344

• **Monday, September 21, 2009**
  Aging Eye Network, “Sense-Abilities” with “Ask a Doctor” panel including Stephen Pappas, Jr., M.D., 1:15 p.m.
  Holiday Park Multiservice Senior Center
  3950 Ferrara Drive
  Silver Spring, MD 20906 / (240) 777-4999

• **Tuesday, September 22, 2009**
  Sibley Senior Association, “Tea and Conversation: The Window to Your Eyes,” 1:30 p.m.
  Melanie J. Buttross, M.D., ophthalmologist
  Sibley Memorial Hospital, Renaissance Building, Room 1
  5255 Loughboro Road, NW
  Washington, DC 20016 / (202) 364-7602

• **Wednesday, September 23, 2009**
  Picture This! Descriptive Art Tour and Share Group, 1 p.m.
  Share Group 2 - 2:45 p.m.
  National Gallery of Art, West Building
  Meet at Second Floor, Rotunda
  4th and Constitution Avenue, NW
  Washington, DC 20565 / (202) 737-4215

For more information on these events, please call POB at (202) 234-1010
Age-Related Macular Degeneration

And are concerned that they may have AMD and be at risk for vision loss. In considering this question, it is important to make the distinction between early and advanced AMD. Most people with early AMD have relatively good vision and can carry out usual everyday activities. However, they may be at an increased risk for progressing to advanced AMD, which can lead to a loss of central vision and a decreased ability to read fine print, drive and recognize faces. Vision loss is almost always central so that even in very advanced cases, patients generally retain their peripheral vision and can navigate their surroundings without special assistance.

It has been increasingly appreciated that AMD has a genetic component, that is, a person’s genes and genetic make-up have some influences on the occurrence and nature of the disease. In conclusion, it is important to perform research to find out more about the genes that may influence the risk of AMD. The lessons may be helpful in identifying patients that are at higher risk so that more efforts and attention may be directed at measures that can reduce risk. Also, in the future, it is possible that genes may also help guide how and in what way a patient with advanced AMD may treated. Understanding these genes and how they work in the eye
may also help doctors learn more about the basic biology of AMD and to come up with new and better ways to treating and preventing this important health concern.

Join us for
Second Annual
Age-Related Macular Degeneration Town Meeting

Sunday, November 15
2:30 - 4 p.m.

with Wai Wong, M.D., Ph.D.
National Eye Institute
National Institutes of Health

Sibley Memorial Hospital
Ernst Auditorium
5255 Loughboro Road, NW
Washington, DC 20016
What’s Happening

News from POB

- In June and July, POB partnered with Georgetown University Hospital’s KIDS Mobile Medical Clinic/Ronald McDonald Care Mobile to provide free eye exams with a volunteer ophthalmologist and free eyeglasses to children who need them. POB screened more than XX children during the two clinics.

- Modeling auditions for the second annual American Girl Fashion Show were held in June. More than 90 local young girls will participate in the fashion show in November at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Md., that helps raise funds and awareness of POB’s sight-saving children’s programs.

- Construction has begun for the new low vision clinic that will be located adjacent to POB’s Look Again Resale Shop at 900 King Street in Alexandria, Va. Stay tuned for more updates on the opening of the low vision clinic!

- The Night of Vision will be on Saturday, March 27, 2010 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington, DC. The Professional Service Award recipient will be Mohamad Jaafar, M.D. The Night of Vision, “Set Your Sights on Green,” will focus on POB’s two resale shops and eyeglass recycling program.
Special Program
with expert panel including

Stephen Pappas, Jr., M.D.
Ophthalmologist

“Sense-Abilities”
Explore the causes, consequences and solutions for living with diminished vision, hearing and memory.

Monday, September 21
1:15 p.m.

Holiday Park Multiservice Senior Center
3950 Ferrara Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20906
(240) 777-4449

For more information, please call (202) 234-1010
Save the Date

October 10: Macular Degeneration Network, Sibley Memorial Hospital, 10:30 a.m., First Connection Share Group 9:30 a.m.
October 13: Washington Hospital Center, Eye Clinic, 11 a.m.
October 13: Low Vision Group, Falcon’s Landing, 2 p.m.
October 15: Low Vision Group, Classic Residence by Hyatt, 1:30 p.m.
October 15: Stargardt’s Network, Aladdin’s Eatery, 6:15 p.m.
October 19: Aging Eye Network, “Update on Cataract Surgery,” Holiday Park Multiservice Senior Center, 1:15 p.m.
October 20: Vision Support Group, Friendship Heights Village Center, 12:30 p.m.
October 21: Low Vision Group, Vinson Hall, 10 a.m.
October 22: “Picture This!,” National Gallery of Art, 1 p.m.

To receive E-mail reminders about upcoming events, please send an E-mail to jheilman@youreyes.org.

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For the Blind or
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Prevention of Blindness Society

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