Stem Cell Procedure May Aid Vision

According to Dr. Emily Chew, a lead investigator at the National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Medical Advisor to POB’s Macular Degeneration Network, the first mini step towards a very complex procedure of implanting stem cells for eye diseases has been launched by University of California, Los Angeles investigators.

There have been reports on administering this procedure to a young person with a juvenile type of macular degeneration and a patient with a “dry” type of age-related macular degeneration. The dreaded outcome of potential tumor formation was not seen during this very short follow-up. There were suggestions of visual improvement but these might be within measurement errors and longer follow-up is required.

One particular concern is that in the case of macular degeneration, the patient.....
may have failed to take the drugs that help to facilitate any transplant tissue (drugs used commonly for kidney transplants, for example). This might have had an effect.

There are still many unknowns because the follow-up was very short for two chronic conditions. This offers hope but we must temper this with realistic expectations that can only be met by a much larger study with longer follow-up. But it is particularly reassuring that they did not develop tumors at this short stage of follow-up.

We are looking forward to further studies in this exciting field.

Coping with the Emotional Impact of Fading Sight

People who become visually impaired may experience a range of feelings, including sadness, anger, worry, frustration and fear. While these feelings are common and understandable, they should not be ignored.

Join Nina Glasner, LCSW, LCW on Sunday, March 18 at the Macular Degeneration Network meeting at Sibley Memorial Hospital for a discussion on this important topic. More information is available on page seven.
Vision Rehabilitation: A Path to Independence

Vision rehabilitation helps people develop the skills and strategies needed to accomplish whatever goals they set for themselves, from continuing their jobs to keeping up with favorite hobbies.

While these services cannot restore normal vision, they can help people make the most of any existing sight, maintain an independent lifestyle, and minimize both the practical and emotional consequences of vision loss.

Join Dr. Alexis Malkin, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist at POB’s Low Vision Learning Center, on Wednesday, March 14 at the Charles E. Beatley Library in Alexandria, VA, and learn much more about this important topic for you, your family and friends. More information is available in the calendar section on page six.
POB Award

POB Honors Dr. Suleiman Alibhai with Professional Service Award

Dr. Suleiman Alibhai will receive POB’s Professional Service Award at POB’s 25th Annual Night of Vision® gala.

This award is given each year to an individual whose efforts make a positive difference in the lives of those with vision issues.

Dr. Alibhai is a premier low vision specialist who was a pioneer in providing low vision services in the practice of ophthalmology. He has been a “friend” to the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington for more than 20 years. He has spent his career helping people understand what is “right” with their sight rather than focus on what may be wrong.

In 2010, he began providing services at POB’s Low Vision Learning Center in Alexandria, VA. Dr. Alibhai is also the Low Vision Consultant at the National Eye Institute at NIH and an Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins University’s Department of Ophthalmology.

The gala’s theme is “Eye on Low Vision” in honor of Dr. Alibhai’s work and the pride he has brought to POB and the Washington Metropolitan Area world of eye care.
Calendar of Events

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

• Monday, March 5, 2012
  “Preventing Falls,” (re-scheduled from February 6), 2:00 p.m.
  Five Star Premier Residences of Chevy Chase
  (formerly Classic Residences)
  8100 Connecticut Avenue
  Chevy Chase, MD 20815
  Free program and parking.

• Wednesday March 7, 2012
  Leisure World Low Vision Group, “Better Light for Better Sight”
  1 p.m., Audio Described Video and Discussion
  For more information, please contact Jane Brinser at (301) 438-2599.

In case of inclement weather, please call (301) 312-3685 for updated event information.
Calendar of Events

• Tuesday, March 13, 2012
  Low Vision Group, “Metro Accessibility and Rider Safety,”
  11 a.m., Guest Speaker: Brigid Doherty, COMS
  Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority
  Washington Hospital Center Ophthalmology Clinic
  110 Irving Street, NW (bus circle entrance)
  Washington, DC 20010
  Register and reserve lunch by calling  202-877-6081

• Wednesday, March 14, 2012
  “Achieving Your Vision Rehab Goals,” 2-3:30 p.m.
  Guest Speaker: Dr. Alexis Malkin
  Charles E. Beatley Library
  5005 Duke Street
  Alexandria, VA 22304
  For more information, please call (703) 746-1760.

• Thursday, March 15, 2012
  Vision Lunch and Learn, “Audible Traffic Signals,”
  12:30-1:30 p.m.
  Guest Speaker: Charles Crawford, III
  Vice-Chair, Montgomery County
  Commission for People with Disabilities
  Friendship Heights Village Center
  4433 South Park Avenue
  Chevy Chase, MD 20815
  Free peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and a light
dessert available.
  Please call (301) 656-2797 to reserve your spot.
• Sunday, March 18, 2012
Macular Degeneration Network
“Emotional Impact of Fading Sight,” 2-3:30 p.m.
Guest Speaker: Nina Glasner, LCSW, LCW
Sibley Memorial Hospital, New Medical Building
5215 Loughboro Road, NW
Washington, DC 20016.
Co-sponsored by Sibley Senior Association.
Free program, garage parking and refreshments.
For more information call (301) 538-9358.

• Wednesday, March 21, 2012
Low Vision Group, Open Discussion with
Gloria Sussman, 10 a.m.
Vinson Hall
6251 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, VA 22101

• Wednesday, March 28, 2012
“Picture This!” 1-2:30 p.m.
National Gallery of Art, West Building
Meet at Second Floor Rotunda
4th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20565
Please call (202) 737-4215 for more information.
**Save the Date**

**April 22:** Cataract Update: What You Need to Know Before Heading for Surgery! - 2:00-3:30 p.m.  
Guest Speaker: Howard Weiss, MD, MPH  
Washington Eye Physicians & Surgeons  
Sibley Memorial Hospital New Medical Building

Visit POB’s website, www.youreyes.org, to stay up to date on event information.

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