Stem Cell Research

Taking another tack, companies such as Stem Cells, Inc. are injecting preparations of live cells into the eyes of clinical trial participants with the dry version of the disorder. The hope is that these stem cells will incorporate themselves into the eye structure, and take on the work of a class of eye cells that normally maintain the health of the macula.

Last year, the first participants received injections of 200,000 purified human neural stem cells beneath the retina in the back of the eye. The first goal of the trial, which began at the Retina Foundation of the Southwest in Dallas, TX, is to evaluate the safety of the company’s cell preparation, called HuCNS-SC. Based on follow-up data from the first four trial participants, an independent safety committee cleared the way for Stem Cells to begin injecting new participants with a higher dose of one million cells—the dose the company expects to use if the therapy proves successful in forestalling vision loss. Stem Cells has added the Byers Eye Institute at Stanford in Palo Alto, CA as a trial site, and has gained FDA permission to enroll participants at as many as three other US sites.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. Window-Eyes is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PC’s and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.

To better deliver Window-Eyes to the people who need it most, GW Micro and Microsoft have collaborated on this global initiative, available in over 15 languages, to enable anyone using Microsoft Office 2010 or later to also use Window-Eyes for free. Access to technology is critical to people who are blind or visually impaired in order to have the same opportunity to compete in the workplace. As such, this initiative between GW Micro and Microsoft has the potential to reduce barriers for millions of people who are blind or visually impaired around the world. Use this link http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com to download the program.

Hallucinations: Am I going Crazy?

AMD and Charles Bonnet Syndrome.
DVD available on request with detailed information! Call: 888-633-3937

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. Window-Eyes is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PC’s and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.

To better deliver Window-Eyes to the people who need it most, GW Micro and Microsoft have collaborated on this global initiative, available in over 15 languages, to enable anyone using Microsoft Office 2010 or later to also use Window-Eyes for free. Access to technology is critical to people who are blind or visually impaired in order to have the same opportunity to compete in the workplace. As such, this initiative between GW Micro and Microsoft has the potential to reduce barriers for millions of people who are blind or visually impaired around the world. Use this link [http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com](http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com) to download the program.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. Window-Eyes is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PC’s and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.

To better deliver Window-Eyes to the people who need it most, GW Micro and Microsoft have collaborated on this global initiative, available in over 15 languages, to enable anyone using Microsoft Office 2010 or later to also use Window-Eyes for free. Access to technology is critical to people who are blind or visually impaired in order to have the same opportunity to compete in the workplace. As such, this initiative between GW Micro and Microsoft has the potential to reduce barriers for millions of people who are blind or visually impaired around the world. Use this link [http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com](http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com) to download the program.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. Window-Eyes is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PC’s and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.

To better deliver Window-Eyes to the people who need it most, GW Micro and Microsoft have collaborated on this global initiative, available in over 15 languages, to enable anyone using Microsoft Office 2010 or later to also use Window-Eyes for free. Access to technology is critical to people who are blind or visually impaired in order to have the same opportunity to compete in the workplace. As such, this initiative between GW Micro and Microsoft has the potential to reduce barriers for millions of people who are blind or visually impaired around the world. Use this link [http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com](http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com) to download the program.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp.

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. Window-Eyes is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PC’s and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.

To better deliver Window-Eyes to the people who need it most, GW Micro and Microsoft have collaborated on this global initiative, available in over 15 languages, to enable anyone using Microsoft Office 2010 or later to also use Window-Eyes for free. Access to technology is critical to people who are blind or visually impaired in order to have the same opportunity to compete in the workplace. As such, this initiative between GW Micro and Microsoft has the potential to reduce barriers for millions of people who are blind or visually impaired around the world. Use this link [http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com](http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com) to download the program.
Questions to Liz

Liz Trauernicht - CEO
MD Foundation

When Do People with AMD Stop Driving?

A new cross-sectional study has concluded that most patients with AMD-related central vision loss continue to drive, but that they impose significant driving restrictions on themselves, especially with severe visual acuity and contrast sensitivity loss.

To determine if central visual loss is associated with driving cessation, driving restriction, or other-driver preference, researchers compared two groups of senior adults. 64 subjects had vision loss from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and 58 subjects were normally sighted.

Subjects with AMD who were still driving reported a greater number of driving restrictions than control subjects, and they had a greater preference for having other people drive.

Drivers with AMD-related vision loss were more likely to avoid driving over longer distances, beyond 1 hour, at night, and in unfamiliar conditions.

Subjects who had stopped driving had developed significantly worse vision in the better-seeing eye compared with those who continued to drive.

It is encouraging that most people with low vision are evidently imposing their own restrictions on driving.

This is useful information to have when discussing this sometimes contentious issue with people who are facing the possibility of limiting driving or giving up their car keys altogether.

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

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

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

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

In The News

Exercise May Slow Macular Degeneration

The Journal of Neuroscience is published by the Society for Neuroscience, an organization of nearly 40,000 basic scientists and clinicians who study the brain and nervous system. Moderate aerobic exercise helps to preserve the structure and function of nerve cells in the retina after damage, according to an animal study appearing in The Journal of Neuroscience. The findings suggest exercise may be able to slow the progression of retinal degenerative diseases.

AREDS Formula Does Not Prevent AMD

A recently completed study has shown that long-term daily intake of vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and multivitamin supplements have no significant effect on prevention of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Though this appears to conflict with the AREDS results, it is important to remember that the AREDS formula was shown to slow the progression of AMD to the advanced wet form. As this study confirms, it has never been intended for preventative use. The recommended ways to prevent onset of AMD continue to be good diet, exercise, avoidance of tobacco smoking, weight control, and protection of the eyes from direct sunlight.

Time Between Lucentis and Eylea Treatments Found To Be Similar

The principal difference between the two leading FDA-approved anti-VEGF drugs, Eylea and Lucentis for treatment of retinal hemorrhage has been accepted as the difference in length of time between injections. A new study, however, found no significant difference in injection scheduling between the drugs. The overall mean days between injections differed by only 1.8 days in the two groups of patients. The 6 months analyses included 319 Eylea patients and 1,054 Lucentis patients, and the 12 month analyses included 57 Eylea patients and 374 Lucentis patients. The study was sponsored by Genentech Pharmaceuticals, makers of Lucentis.

If these results continue to hold true in clinical use, this would effectively negate the main factor in deciding which drug to use, since the cost differs by only about $100 per treatment. The report appears in the December 2013 issue of Advances in Therapy.

In The News

Unequal Vision Can Cause Falls

New research reported in Optometry & Vision Science has shed light on the possibility that falling may be partially blamed on a common condition in older adults called anisometropia. Anisometropia is a condition in which a person’s eyes have unequal refractive power, meaning different levels of myopia (nearsightedness) or hyperopia (farsightedness).

After assessing refractive error over a period of 12 years in 118 subjects, the researchers found that anisometropia is at least 10 times more common in the elderly than in children. Eye care specialists are already aware of the consequences of binocular differences caused by macular degeneration, and now this offers another ingredient to the mix. “Clinicians,” say the authors of the study, “need to be aware of this common condition that could potentially cause falls in the elderly.”

Daily Use of Aspirin & Vision Loss

LONDON — A new research has suggested that people who take a daily dose of aspirin are twice as likely to suffer an age-related loss of vision as people who never take the pain reliever, according to a European study.

Researchers who tested more than 4,000 elderly people across Europe found that those who took the drug every day were twice as likely to be diagnosed with late stage age related macular degeneration as those who did not, the Telegraph reported. Of the 839 people who took aspirin each day, 36 had an advanced form of the disease called wet macular degeneration or about four out of every 100 daily aspirin users.

In comparison, roughly two out of every 100 people who took aspirin less frequently had the same type of macular degeneration. However, 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.

MD Support and Prevent Blindness America Establish New On-Line Resource

The new resource provides an extensive list of searchable resource directories, a database of 1,500 municipal paratransit services, a library of self-help guides and workbooks, and up-to-the-minute news. This marks the first time in Internet history that two major organizations have joined in such a dramatic way to bring both education and support to the entire global low vision community.

See lowvision.preventblindness.org or mdsupport.org
Vision Loss & Social Security Benefits

by Molly Clarke

If you find yourself unable to work due to vision loss, you may be eligible to receive Social Security Disability benefits. These benefits can be used to help cover costs associated with daily living, assistive devices, and routine medical expenses. Prior to submitting an application for disability benefits, it is important to understand your options.

Social Security Disability Benefit Programs

The Social Security Administration (SSA) oversees the two largest federal benefit programs in the United States. The first, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), is intended to provide financial assistance to disabled working adults and their families. To qualify, SSDI applicants will need to have sufficient employment history and past Social Security tax contributions. Only applicants who have paid Social Security taxes from their wages will qualify for SSDI benefits. For more information about applying for SSDI, visit the following page: http://www.disability-benefits-help.org/glossary/social-security-disability-insurance-ssdi.

The alternative is Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which assists elderly and disabled individuals who have demonstrated financial need. Applicants for SSI will be asked to submit part of their finances-income and resources, for evaluation. You will only qualify for SSI if you fall within the SSA's financial limits. For more information about SSI eligibility, visit the following page: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm.

Definition of Disability

Anyone seeking SSDI or SSI benefits must first meet the SSA's definition of disabled. This means that you must have a long-term condition that renders you unable to engage in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA). In 2014, a person is considered to be engaging in SGA if he or she earns $1,800 or more in a single month. It is important to note that SGA for blind individuals is higher than SGA for those with other types of disabilities.

If you do not meet the SSA's definition of disabled, you will not be eligible to receive disability benefits from either program.

Continued ...

Medical Security Benefits: Continued ...

Medical Eligibility

The SSA also requires that applicants meet criteria specific to their disability. These medical criteria are published in a guidebook of disabling conditions referred to as the Blue Book. You must meet the blue book listing for your impairment before you can be awarded benefits. If you are unable to meet a particular listing, or no listing exists for your condition, you can also qualify by matching the severity of an existing listing.

To qualify for benefits, you must meet the specific symptoms listed under one of the following sections:

2.02-Loss of Visual Acuity
2.03-Contraction of the Visual Field in the Better Eye
2.04-Loss of Visual Efficiency, or Visual Impairment, in the Better Eye

If you do not understand the listing or cannot tell if you qualify, it may be in your best interest to consult your doctor. He or she will be able to explain the listing in more understandable terms and can help you conduct the tests necessary for eligibility.

Application Preparation and Submission

If you find that you meet the technical and medical requirements to receive disability benefits, you should begin preparing to submit your application. You will need to collect documentation to support and validate your claim. This will include medical records, employment records, tax information, and income statements.

To fill out and submit the application, you can visit the SSA's website or call their main phone number. The application is made up of several different forms—each of which will require thoroughly detailed and accurate information. The SSA maintains website accessibility and will try their best to make any other accommodations that you need during the Social Security Disability application process.

Once you submit your application, it will likely take at least three months, often longer, before you receive a decision. In most cases, first time applications are denied. If your application is denied, you will have 60 days in which you must start the appeals process.

If your application is denied, do not give up. Although it may be discouraging to face the appeals process, more applicants are approved during appeals than during the initial application submission. Increase your chances of success by remaining organized and persistent.

For more information about applying for disability with vision loss or impairment, follow this link: http://www.disability-benefits-help.org/disabling-conditions/vision-loss-and-social-security-disability.