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Nearly 3 out of 4 Americans Don't Know the Leading Cause of Blindness in People Over Age 60

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Will Affect an Estimated 20 Million People in the United States by 2020

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Seventy-four percent of Americans did not know that age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in people in the United States over the age of 60, according to a new survey. The top choice selected was, incorrectly, glaucoma. Despite the high prevalence of AMD, the majority of respondents — 66 percent — report that they are somewhat or not confident in their ability to care for their loved one should a family member develop AMD.

AMD is a progressive disease, which can lead to severe central vision “blind spots” in both eyes in the most advanced form, end-stage AMD. People living with end-stage AMD find it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read, watch TV or complete tasks requiring detailed vision. The condition is also associated with increased stress and depression as vision diminishes.ⁱ

The survey results, commissioned for February’s AMD Awareness Month, highlight the need to educate older adults living with or at risk for AMD, as well as their potential caregivers, about how to manage and treat a progressive condition for which there is no cure.

“The early and intermediate stages of AMD usually start without symptoms, and only a comprehensive, dilated eye exam can detect AMD,” stated Samuel Masket MD, of Advanced Vision Care of Los Angeles and Clinical Professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. “The good news is that preventative and treatment options for patients with AMD have advanced remarkably just in the past ten years.”

AMD is on the Rise

Recent projections estimate that in the United States the number of individuals with AMD will reach 20 million in 2020.ⁱⁱ That estimate mirrors survey findings, which found that 43% of Americans age 65 years or older (equivalent to nearly 20 million Americans) have or know someone with AMD.

As AMD worsens and vision diminishes, the need for caregiving increases. Notably, the survey found that more than 1 in 3 (35%) Americans who know someone with AMD assist them frequently. This supports studies finding that people living with advanced AMD may need assistance nearly four hours per day, five days per week. Spouses or adult children

provide 72 percent of that care.iii

“Patients who lose central vision may feel like their independence is impacted if they need to ask for help signing checks, making selections at the grocery store or even recognizing grandchildren. As a result, adults with AMD are at higher risk for depression as their vision diminishes, which is why it’s important to develop an individualized management plan that incorporates a range of treatment and caregiving strategies,” stated Mark S. Milner, MD, FACS, Co-Founder and Co-Medical Director of Precision LASIK Group and Associate Clinical Professor at Yale University School of Medicine.

A new website, AMDAffectsMe.com, sponsored by [CentraSight®](http://CentraSight.com), offers comprehensive information explaining how AMD is diagnosed and treated as well as stories from caregivers assisting their loved ones living with End-stage AMD.

AMD Caregiving: Dr. Masket and Dr. Milner Offer the Following Tips

- Initiate dialogue – Make a list of questions for your doctor about your specific diagnosis and available treatments
- Make lifestyle changes – quitting smoking, losing weight and watching your blood pressure can help reduce the risk of AMD progression; simple changes like adjusting lighting and investing in an e-reader (that allows for larger print) can make daily life easier
- Discuss driving – have a serious conversation with your family and physician about whether driving is safe for you and other people on the road
- Find support – There are low vision resource centers and AMD awareness groups across the country
- Research options – Learn more about the latest treatments, such as the telescope implant for those with the severest form of AMD.

About the Survey

The survey was sponsored by [CentraSight](http://CentraSight.com), a comprehensive treatment program that uses a tiny telescope implant to restore vision and improve quality of life for patients with the most advanced form of AMD. The independent survey of 1,014 nationally representative US adults ages 18+ was conducted by Wakefield Research. The survey was conducted between February 1 and February 4, 2016.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

About CentraSight and the Telescope Implant

The Implantable Miniature Telescope (by Dr. Isaac Lipshitz) is indicated for monocular implantation to improve vision in patients greater than or equal to 65 years of age with stable severe to profound vision impairment (best-corrected distance visual acuity 20/160 to 20/800) caused by bilateral central scotomas (blind areas) associated with end-stage AMD. This level of visual impairment constitutes statutory (legal) blindness. Smaller than a pea, the telescope is implanted in one eye in an outpatient surgical procedure. In the implanted

eye, the device renders enlarged central vision images over a wide area of the retina to improve central vision, while the non-operated eye provides peripheral vision for mobility and orientation. The telescope implant is part of the CentraSight treatment program to help patients follow the necessary steps for proper diagnosis, surgical evaluation, and postoperative care.

The telescope implant is not a cure for End-stage AMD. As with any medical intervention, potential risks and complications exist with the telescope implant. Possible side effects include decreased vision or vision impairing corneal swelling. The risks and benefits associated with the telescope implant are discussed at www.CentraSight.com.

Patients and physicians can learn more about the telescope implant by visiting www.CentraSight.com or calling 1-877-99-SIGHT.

iBennion, AE, Shaw, RL, Gibson, JM "What do we know about the experience of age related macular degeneration? A systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative research?" Social Science & Medicine. 75 (2012) 976-985.

iFrequently Asked Questions, Macular Vision Research Foundation. <http://www.mvrf.org/understanding-macular-degeneration/frequently-asked-questions/#footlink2> Accessed on 2/11/2016

iIMPACT OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ON USE OF CAREGIVING BY INDIVIDUALS WITH AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION, SCHMIER, JORDANA K.; HALPERN, MICHAEL T.; COVERT, DAVID; More Retina. 26(9):1056-1062, November/December 2006.

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