

Eye on Health

Finding Better Ways To Treat Vision Loss

(NAPSA)—There may be new hope for many people suffering with one of the most common causes of vision loss: advanced age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

AMD is a disease that damages an area of the eye called the macula, which is responsible for central vision. The condition is a leading cause of blindness among older Americans. Nearly 2 million people in the U.S. are visually impaired by AMD, while more than 7 million are at increased risk of vision loss from the disease.

Now, new clinical trials from the National Eye Institute (NEI) may help change that. They'll compare the safety and effectiveness of two drugs currently used to treat advanced AMD.

The clinical trial of the drugs—Lucentis (ranibizumab) and Avastin (bevacizumab)—will be conducted at 47 clinical centers across the country.

It is hoped the results of this study will improve the treatment of wet AMD, a form of AMD that occurs when abnormal blood vessels behind the retina start to grow under the macula. These new blood vessels leak blood and fluid, damaging the



Age-related Macular Degeneration

New clinical trials could lead to better treatment of a leading cause of blindness.

macula and causing a rapid loss of vision.

“Visual impairment from AMD can lead to loss of independence and a reduced quality of life,” says Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., director of NEI. “This clinical trial will evaluate whether the treatment burden for patients can be reduced without compromising effectiveness.”

Dr. Sieving adds that reducing the frequency—but not effectiveness—of wet AMD treatments would reduce the treatment burden for patients and produce a potential cost savings.

Getting Involved

To learn more about the clinical trials, or to find out how you can get involved, visit www.nei.nih.gov/CATT.