

Video script: Advanced forms of AMD

Welcome to this dryAMD.eu video where we take a closer look at advanced age-related macular degeneration (advanced AMD).

There are various eye disorders affecting the macula at the back of the eye, the central region of the retina. They are referred to collectively as «macular degeneration».

Since this eye disease mainly affects people over 65, it is also called age-related macular degeneration, in short, AMD.

Advanced AMD is considered the single largest cause of blindness in industrial nations.

Doctors distinguish between two types of advanced AMD. One type is called geographic atrophy, a term used to describe the advanced form of dry AMD. The other type is called wet or neovascular AMD.

To better understand why there are two forms of AMD and how they are distinguished, it is important to take a closer look at the disease.

First, let's focus on advanced dry AMD:

Advanced dry AMD, also known as geographic atrophy, leads to thinning and ageing of the macula, as a result of the deposit of small yellow pieces of fat and proteins called "drusen", just

under the retina. A few small drusen may not cause changes in vision. But as the drusen get bigger and more numerous, they might distort vision.

As the chronic, progressive degeneration continues, the light-sensitive photoreceptors in the macula get thinner and eventually die.

Reaching the advanced form of dry AMD, blind spots appear first outside of the central field of vision before it reaches central vision, leading to blindness.

The disease progression is constant and always irreversible.

Secondly, we take a look at the wet form of advanced AMD.

In the wet form of advanced AMD, blood vessels grow from underneath the retina. These blood vessels leak blood and fluid into the retina. The vision is distorted so that straight lines look wavy, blind spots might appear as well including loss of central vision. These blood vessels and their bleeding eventually form a scar, leading to permanent loss of central vision.

Unlike in advanced dry AMD, there are already treatments available that can stop or at least slow down the progression of wet AMD.

Treatment options for wet AMD include laser photocoagulation, a procedure used to close leaking blood vessels or fluid reservoirs in the retina with a laser.

A common treatment is anti-VEGF injections. These injections are given directly into the eye and block the activity of the vascular endothelial growth factor protein, in short VEGF, which stimulate the formation of blood vessels.

Advanced dry AMD or geographic atrophy and equally wet AMD are different manifestations of advanced AMD. An eye with advanced dry AMD can also naturally develop wet AMD, and vice versa.

About 40% of cases are the advanced dry AMD or geographic atrophy type, while 60% are the wet AMD type.

In one study, 98% of patients with wet AMD progressed to advanced dry AMD over an average of 7.3 years of follow-up.

Usually, both forms of advanced AMD first start out in just one eye, but over time they can affect both eyes. Specialised ophthalmologists will therefore always examine both eyes for advanced dry AMD and wet AMD.

That brings us to the end of this video where we provided you with an overview of the two forms of advanced age-related macular degeneration: advanced dry AMD or geographic atrophy, and wet or neovascular AMD.

Make sure to check out the other videos with interesting and valuable information on this website dryAMD.eu.

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