

High Blood Pressure May Be A Risk Factor For Age Related Macular Degeneration

People With Hypertension Should Be Monitored 

(NAPSA)—Findings from a recent study suggest that individuals with high blood pressure, clinically known as hypertension, may be at greater risk of developing the wet form of **Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)**, the most common cause of legal blindness in individuals over the age of fifty-five. Of the 644 patients studied, those with AMD were four times as likely to have hypertension. Therefore, researchers caution, it may be wise for hypertensive patients to be monitored closely to detect the early stages of AMD.

Dr. Leslie Hyman, a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, led the study, the first of its kind to link AMD with hypertension.

AMD causes a progressive loss of central vision due to deterioration of the macula, the center of the retina. Individuals with AMD

first experience blurring of central vision. If left untreated, the disease leads to a complete loss of central vision, making it impossible to drive, read, or see the faces of loved ones.

The Food and Drug Administration recently approved a treatment for AMD called photodynamic therapy with Visudyne, which can preserve a patient's vision if AMD is detected early.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is the leading information clearinghouse and resource of patients, their families and others who need to learn more about retinal degenerative diseases and recent research findings. It is the largest non-governmental source of research funding to combat retinal degenerative diseases such as macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa and Stargardt disease. For more information, contact The Foundation Fighting Blindness at 1-800-683-5555 or visit their Web site at www.blindness.org.