



MACULAR
DEGENERATION
NEW ZEALAND

Viewpoint

The MDNZ Newsletter
Issue 3 - December 2015

0800 MACULA
(0800 622 852)

info@mdnz.org.nz

A Christmas Story

From December 2008

I'm getting on in years now
I'm nearly eighty-eight
I thought by now I would long be gone,
Thru that "PEARLY GATE"
But I'm still here much to my surprise
And I never thought for a moment
There'd be something wrong with my eyes.

But there it is – called "Macular Disease"
They give these fancy words to tease
No mucking about with me tho,
It's plain as plain can be
It's just "old age" – that's for sure
That's what's wrong with me.

Serves me right in a way,
I've winked at the boys for years (*just kidding*)
And that's the eye that's gone astray
But heck I shed no tears.

So off I go to Greenlane (hospital)
To see a specialist there
The doctors and the nurses,
The photographer and technician.
And the care they give is noticeable
On your first day of admission.

The receptionist in that
Oh so crowded room,
So many people with troubled eyes,
Is enough to make you swoon.

Inside this issue

- 2015 in summary
- Optics: The True Nature of Light
- Diet, exercise and genes interact to affect AMD risk
- Media coverage in 2015
- What's ahead for 2016?
- "Sobriety and good eyes"
– a profile of MDNZ
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- RANZCO Conference

But they sort us all out
In a nice friendly way
And for sure. All you folks
Really make my day.

Thank you for all you have done
Xmas greetings, have some fun
Enjoy your break, God bless you all
And on New Year's Eve
Go Have a Ball.





This newsletter is sponsored by:

**FREEMASONS
FOUNDATION**

2015 in summary

1880 people attended 23 public education and treatment seminars and community seminars.

Ten Ophthalmologists volunteered time to present seminars.

1200 calls to the **0800 save sight helpline 0800 MACULA (622 852)**.

3700 information packs issued to callers, seminars and conferences.

Five medical and eye health conferences attended with an MDNZ stand and **speakers**.

Awareness Week saw coverage on radio, TV, print, website and Facebook media.

Viewpoint newsletter launched with three issues in the first year.

21 Optometrists and 11 Ophthalmologists joined the new Professional Friend programme.

Over 1600 hours of voluntary time donated to MDNZ.

Partners in Media:

- **oOh Media** continues to display digital images in malls around NZ

- **Blackmores** featured an eye health TV campaign

- **41 stories and features** in local print/online media for the education and treatment seminar series

- **NZ Optics** supported MDNZ with regular features

Online learning for all health care professionals accessed through Goodfellow Learning.

Thank you to all who supported the MD Charity Race day, the French Film Festival, Blue Illusion fashion evening, and The Giving Tree Christmas card sales, all who raised funds for the work of MDNZ.

120 letters sent to MPs, **met with 22 MPs** and Ministry of Health officials.

Thank you to grant funders – Laurence William Nelson Trust, Louisa and Patrick Emmett Murphy Foundation, Freemasons Foundation, Freemasons Selwyn Lodge, Trust Waikato, Freemasons ARA lodge, T G McCarthy Charitable Trust, TM Hosking Charitable Trust.

Optics: The True Nature of Light

Physicist Jim al-Khalili reveals how Islamic thinkers played a crucial role in explaining light and optics.

Playing a vital role in our everyday lives, technologies based on light are in use all around us. From art and science to modern technology, the study of light – and how it behaves and interacts with matter has intrigued scientists for over a century.

2015 marked the 1,000th anniversary of the Kitab al-Manazir (The Book of Optics), a seven-volume treatise written by the Iraqi scientist Ibn al-Haytham – a pioneering thinker whose views have been crucial to our understanding of how the universe came into existence.

Shaping our understanding of vision, optics and light, he interrogated theories of light put forward by the Greeks - men like Plato and Euclid who argued that the way we see objects is by shining light out of our eyes onto them. He argued instead, and correctly, that the way we see is by light entering our eyes from outside, either reflecting off objects or directly from luminous bodies, like candles or the sun.

His methodology, which combined theory and experiments, were also remarkable for their emphasis on proof and evidence.

In the first episode of Science in the Golden Age, theoretical physicist, Jim al-Khalili, looks at state-of-the-art applications of optics and traces the science of light back to the Medieval Islamic world.

Source: Al Jazeera

Thank you to our MDNZ Ambassadors

All of us at MDNZ are extremely grateful to our wonderful Ambassadors who proudly support the work of MDNZ.



Mr John Adshead
ONZM
Mt Maunganui



Dame Kate Harcourt
DNZM
Wellington



Dame Rosie Horton
DNZM, QSO, QSM
Auckland



Mrs Viv Jones
Founding Trustee
Mt Maunganui



Sir Peter Leitch
KNZM, QSM
Manukau



Sir Colin Meads
KNZM, MBE
Te Kuiti



Mr Philip Sherry
Tauranga

Thank you to our 2015 sponsors, supporters and partners



Science For A Better Life

BLACKMORES[®]

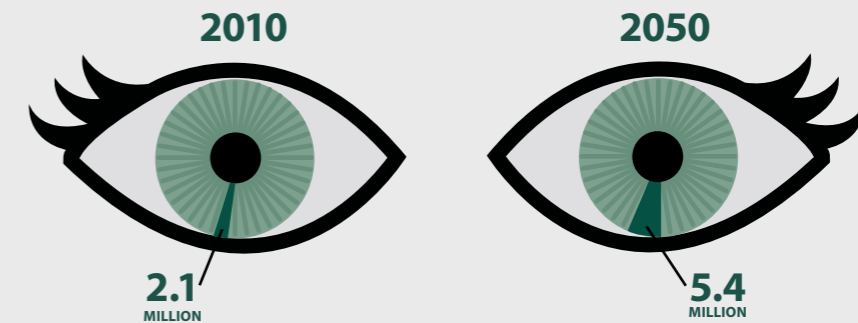


Diet, exercise and genes interact to affect AMD risk

The estimated number of people with AMD will more than double by 2050.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration: National Eye Institute (USA) Looks Ahead

Between 2010 and 2050, the estimated number of people with AMD in the USA will more than double from 2.1 million to 5.4 million.



In a recent study of women conducted by America's National Institutes of Health, it found that people with a genetic predisposition for age-related macular degeneration (AMD) significantly increased their odds of developing this disease if they had a history of heavy smoking and consistently did not exercise or eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Eating a healthy diet and getting exercise have been shown in earlier studies to protect against AMD. Findings from the current study suggest that genetic and lifestyle factors may contribute to AMD in a synergistic way.

The researchers studied the risk among women aged 50 to 79 years who had participated in the Carotenoids in Age-Related Eye Disease Study (CAREDS), an ancillary investigation of the much larger Women's Health Initiative.

Diet and exercise patterns of 1,663 women were evaluated as were the smoking habits of this group. They also assessed genetic data from the women to determine whether they carried known genetic risk factors for AMD.

A total of 337 women in the study developed AMD, of whom 91% had early-stage disease.

Two groups were identified. Women with stable diets, who carried two high-risk genetic alleles, smoked at least seven packs or more a week, and were in the highest-risk diet and exercise categories were more than four times more likely to have AMD than the second group. These women did not have genetic risk factors, ate a healthy diet and got at least 10 hours/week of light exercise (such as housework or walking at a pace you could sing to) or at least eight hours a week of moderate activity (such as brisk walking).

For more information on eye disease, visit nei.nih.gov/health

Media coverage in 2015

We received some great coverage from local community newspapers during the year in the lead-up to our education and treatment seminars. This an excerpt from an article in the Kapiti Observer prior to our Waikanae seminar in September...



Val Cummins

Resident recommends eye treatment.

Val Cummins can still read her magazines as a result of treatment she received for macular degeneration.

As Waikanae prepares to host a macular degeneration seminar this weekend, one resident is sharing her positive experience after being treated for the condition.

The free education and treatment seminar on Sunday will target early diagnosis of the condition, which causes progressive loss of central vision. In New Zealand one in seven people over 50 are affected by the condition.

Symptoms can include smudged or distorted vision, poor tolerance for changing light levels and impaired depth perception. There is no cure, but early detection is crucial to saving a patient's sight.

Waikanae resident Val Cummins was diagnosed with macular degeneration earlier this year.

She said she noticed problems with her vision and took action.

"I knew I had an eye checkup in October, but it must have been April or May when I became aware of fuzziness in my eyes. They sort of weren't working naturally.

Cummins never felt any pain alongside her blurred vision. She believed she had problems in her right eye, but her optometrist noticed leaking blood vessels behind the retina in her left eye. She was treated via injection, to stop the blood vessels growing, and laser treatment to destroy them.

She said the injection was less uncomfortable than she expected.

"They anaesthetise the area and I was quite unaware of it."

"You sort of think about an injection in the eye and you think 'oh no thank you very much."

"With the laser treatment every now and then I get a slight little yellow spot, but nothing deterring."

She said her vision was much better since.

"The balance and everything else has greatly improved."

"I love reading and handiwork, so I didn't want to lose sight."

Cummins will have her final checkup early next week.

Source: Kapiti Observer
Story by Adam Poulopoulos

Macular degeneration eye disease not slowing a Timaru woman down.



Doreen Grubb and husband Ross

Doreen Grubb is determined not to give up sewing and craft, even if she is losing her sight.

Doreen was diagnosed with macular degeneration eight years ago after she noticed black shadows on her left eye.

Macular degeneration is an eye disease which affects one person in seven over the age of 50 and one in four over 80. It is the leading cause of blindness in New Zealand for that "at-risk" age group.

Doreen has lost the central vision in her left eye but still has some peripheral vision left.

She receives injections every six weeks, which she originally had to get in Christchurch but can now get in Timaru.

"There is no cure, unfortunately, just preventing it from getting worse."

The injections could be "nerve-racking" and she did stop them for a while. However, after she lost the vision in her left eye, she said she didn't want it to happen to the other and went back to having them.

There had been a gradual progression of activities she had to give up. She used to do weaving but had to stop as she couldn't see to thread the loom up.

"I replaced it with other things. I did more machine knitting but I couldn't see if I dropped a stitch."

Doreen has since taken up silk painting, because it doesn't need intense sight. She mixes colours to create the scarves she sells. Also a keen musician, she now has to have the sheet music blown up.

Her husband, Ross, is always on hand to help.

"Ross steps in when I get into trouble, he even threads the needles."

It was no trouble for Ross.

"That's what it's all about, for better or for worse ... She's fighting it, she doesn't give up easily," he said.

Doreen has met other people with macular degeneration since going to the Timaru Eye Clinic. She also has a friend who was diagnosed before her and they "compare notes".

Local ophthalmologist Mike Mair spoke at the Timaru seminar, providing an opportunity for people to hear the latest information on research and treatments, as well as the management and the impact of living with this eye disease.

He hoped the seminar would make people aware of the disease and to seek help and treatment early on.

Source: stuff.co.nz/timaruherald
Story by Natasha Thyne

What's ahead for 2016?

Awareness is the key to early detection which leads to saving sight. This is the mantra of MDNZ. Awareness, education and support will remain the primary focus for MDNZ as we aim to reduce the incidence and impact of MD in NZ.

We will continue to work with others to achieve our goals as we cannot do it alone. Our strategic partners, our individual supporters, other charities and friends all play a very important role in making a difference in the lives of many thousands of people with MD and their families and carers.

Everything we do is subject to funding being available and sustainability of the charity is always on our mind, hence there will always be a focus on raising income. We look forward to growing income streams from sponsorships, grant funding, government funding, donor contributions, advertising in the Viewpoint newsletter, Professional Friend membership and more.

To put Macular Degeneration in perspective with other medical conditions, the chart (*top right*) reveals the size and impact MD is having in New Zealand compared to other health issues.

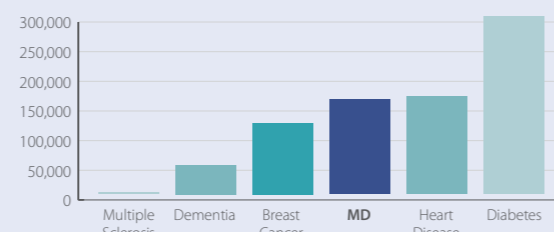
It is well documented that quality of life is compromised for those people living with vision loss and there are some interesting statistics to highlight these facts. (*Centre right.*)

MDNZ continues to support New Zealanders who are at risk, diagnosed or with vision loss.

We would welcome hearing from you if you have any contacts that will help us advance our mission – these could be funders, philanthropists, partners, volunteers and donors.

The impact on New Zealand

The prevalence of MD is higher than many chronic diseases.

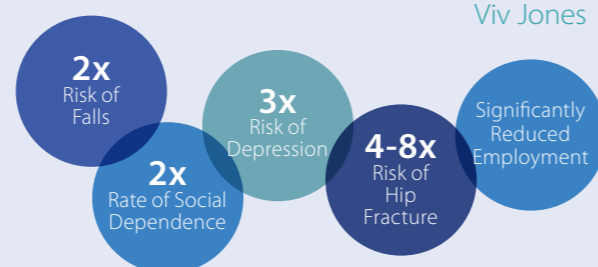


The cost of MD to New Zealand is estimated at \$200,000,000.

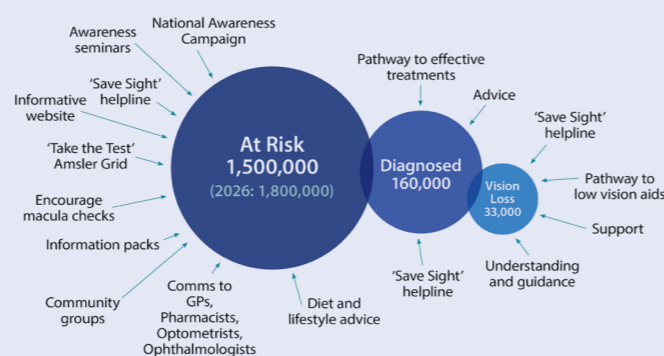
The impact on an individual

"I was devastated to suddenly become totally dependent on others, no longer able to drive, read or identify faces."

Viv Jones



MDNZ is the "go to" organisation for NZ



Public Seminars

Details of the 2016 public seminars will be announced on the MDNZ website www.mdnz.org.nz and in Viewpoint Issue #4 in March 2016.

"Sobriety and good eyes" – a profile of MDNZ Ambassador Philip Sherry

Philip Sherry needs no introduction to New Zealanders as one of NZ's longest serving newsreaders – including flagship bulletins for the NZBC, TV One, South Pacific Television, TV3 and Radio NZ.

He has first-hand experience of the debilitating impact macular degeneration can have, as his mother suffered from the condition. Philip said he was devastated when his mother was assessed as having just 2% sight as a result of macular degeneration.

"I watched the effect of that on her, and her ability to properly identify people and objects, and to enjoy the same kind of independence I was used to seeing her enjoy. So it had a profound effect upon me, and I know that it affected my mother greatly."



Being so close to seeing the impact of MD on his mother, Philip welcomed the opportunity to put his name to MDNZ as an Ambassador when approached.

In 2014 MDNZ brought Philip out of his broadcasting retirement and back to the newsroom one more time to deliver a vital piece of news. This news-bite can be watched on the MDNZ website homepage www.mdnz.org.nz

Philip has been known to say "news reading is like riding a bicycle. All you need is sobriety and good eyes," as he shows us in the video clip.

A day at the Ellerslie Races

MDNZ Race Day - 20 February 2016

It's not too late to get your tickets to join the MDNZ fundraising Race Day at Ellerslie on Saturday 20th February 2016.

Tables of ten are still available at \$1,250 (inc GST).

Individual tickets available at \$140 (inc GST)

We would love you to join us. Last year was a great success and this year is going to be even better. Call us NOW on 0800 622 852 for tickets.



RANZCO Conference

In November, NZ hosted the annual RANZCO (Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists) conference in Wellington, attended by ophthalmologists, orthoptists, technicians and practice managers.

The programme included speakers from around the world bringing the latest information about eye health.

MDNZ Trustee, Dr Dianne Sharp led the Bayer breakfast topic "When every line counts," and Dr Andrew Thompson presented his project in the Leadership in Ophthalmology showcase of projects "To ascertain equity of access to and usage patterns of anti-VEGF therapy in treating ophthalmic disease in patients across all district health boards in NZ."

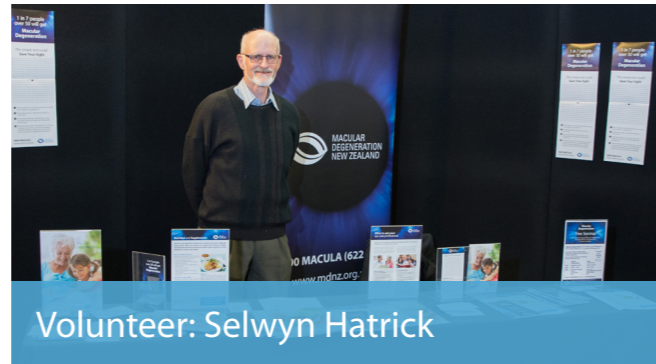


MDNZ stand at RANZCO 2015



Phillippa spoke to the Practice Managers at RANZCO

GP Conference in Rotorua



Volunteer: Selwyn Hatrick

We were grateful to have volunteer, retired Optometrist Selwyn Hatrick, assist at the MDNZ stand in June 2015.

Eye Institute Optometry Conference



The exhibitors at the Eye Institute Conference assemble in front of the MDNZ stand in November 2015

Fashion parade raises funds for MDNZ



Our team at Blue Illusion on 26 November 2015

Blue Illusion fashion store hosted a summer fashion parade with 15% of sales to MDNZ. Thank you everyone for attending, thank you to the Blue Illusion team and to Gates Eyewear for donating to the goodie bags.

In order to continue our sight saving work, we would be very grateful for your donation using the form attached to this newsletter or online via www.mdnz.org.nz

Thank you for your support

We are grateful to have interns and volunteers assist the work of MDNZ.



Farewell to our lovely German intern Helena (at left) after 12 weeks at MDNZ



Please donate to support those with MD

Title Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Other

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Last name

Name to appear on tax receipt

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Suburb

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I would like to give a gift (choose one)

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Amount \$200 \$150 \$100 \$50 or \$

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Card number

Cardholder's name

Amount \$ Expiry date /

Signature

For online donations visit www.mdnz.org.nz

Thank you

I would like to receive information about MD

I would like to receive the MDNZ newsletter

Please send me more information about leaving a gift/ bequest for MDNZ in my will

Please complete this form and return to:

**Macular Degeneration New Zealand,
PO Box 137070, Parnell, Auckland 1151
or Fax 09 307 2021**

For assistance phone

0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.



**Merry
Christmas**

from the team at
**Macular
Degeneration NZ**

The MDNZ office will be closed
from Friday 18 December 2015,
re-opening Monday 11 January 2016.

Wishing you all a safe and happy
Christmas and holiday season
from all of us at MDNZ.



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NEW ZEALAND**