

Chinese Medicine Discovers the Solution

Age related macular degeneration

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Macular degeneration of the eyes mostly occurs as part of the aging process, hence its full name, Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD). AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in the aging population. The disease affects the macula, a small spot near the center of the eye where our sharpest central vision occurs. The macula allows us to read, identify faces, watch television, safely navigate stairs, drive, and perform countless daily tasks. A person suffering from AMD would see dim images or black holes at the center of vision and be left with only their surrounding or peripheral vision.

In the United State today, about 15 million people suffer from AMD. Out of this 15 million, about one quarter are 65 years of age or older.

There are two types of AMD

1. Dry form—there is no loss of fluid in the eyes
2. Wet form—abnormal blood vessels leak fluid into the macula

Over 80 percent of AMD cases are the dry form. The disease usually begins as the dry form, but roughly 10 to 15 percent of the cases then progress to the wet form. The wet form of AMD is more serious because it can cause sudden and severe central vision loss.

In the early stages of AMD, patients may have no noticeable symptoms, or they may experience blurred vision or difficulty seeing at a distance. They may also develop blind spots in the middle of their field of vision or find that straight lines appear as wavy.

Chinese Medicine Treating the Whole Body

Currently, there are not many successful treatments for AMD. However, Chinese medicine has an excellent success rate in dealing with this issue. Chinese medicine looks at the body as a whole rather than as isolated parts. All the organs, both internal and external, are interconnected through a network of energy pathways called meridians or channels. As a result, Chinese medicine does not focus solely on specific parts of the body but on the entire system. For example, eye problems are regarded as directly connected to the kidney and liver organs and their related meridians. Therefore, macular degeneration is not treated by focusing on the eyes, but by addressing problems in these organs and meridians.

For example, people who are farsighted and who have had to wear reading glasses since they were young are usually considered in Chinese

medicine to have a kidney “deficiency,” or weakness. Often, they show other symptoms of kidney deficiency as well as far sightedness.

Symptoms of Kidney Deficiency

- Far sightedness
- Grey or white hair at a younger age than normal
- Cold feet
- Cold hands
- Nervous nature
- Frequent urination
- Nighttime urination

Eye problems such as nearsightedness can be caused by a liver deficiency, which also causes other symptoms.

Symptoms of Liver Deficiency

- Dry eyes
- Sticky or teary eyes
- Blurry vision

The Role of the Blood and Chi in Eye Health

Chinese medicine considers that the blood and chi (life force) are important to the health of the eyes. Chinese medicine has known for thousands of years how the internal organs can affect other organs in the body. For example, the liver provides the blood that brings nourishment to the eyes. When we start to age, usually our chi and blood start to get weak or deficient. If we don't get the same nutritional supply to our eyes as before, we can develop eye problems. This information has been known to Chinese practitioners for millennia and can be found in the ancient Chinese medicine text, The Yellow Emperor's Classic (Huangdi Neijing).

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Chinese Medicine and AMD

To treat AMD, Chinese medicine begins by tonifying (bringing energy to) the liver, kidney, blood, and chi. To do this, we use mainly Chinese acupuncture and herbal formulas.

The best way to re-open the body's closed meridians and collaterals and to improve the flow of blood and chi is through acupuncture. As we get older, our eyes can get damaged in various

ways—e.g., if we work in a very strong light or in bluish light (emitted by electronics) for too long, it can weaken the supply of chi to the eyes and slow down its flow. This can result in damage to the meridians and the eyes.

Chinese medicine also has a great many herbs to treat AMD. These herbs are designed to strengthen weakened kidneys, liver, blood, and chi so they can support the eyes. The liver, kidneys and eyes are connected through the meridians or energy channels or collaterals. The collaterals send the chi to the eyes and ensure that the blood vessels work properly and stay healthy and strong.

Austin Natural Healing Center

In the past ten years, through research and practice, Austin Natural Healing Center (ANHC) has developed a unique set of treatments for AMD, including herbal formulas designed to treat the wet form of AMD. The wet form of AMD can get worse very quickly and can cause blindness. We use both traditional acupuncture methods, combined with the Zhang Micro-Acupuncture System, to increase chi flow to specific points on the eyes. We have found this method to be very successful and usually see results very quickly. Within several courses of treatment, the patient's vision is usually restored. For example, one 64-year-old patient had lost his driver's license due to AMD. After several courses of treatment, his vision improved so much that he was able to get his license back and drive again.

Even if AMD runs in your family, you can prevent this type of vision loss from happening to you. If you already have symptoms of AMD, you can look to Chinese medicine to help you find the solution.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, visit austinnaturalhealingcenter.com, call (512) 306-0535 or stop by the Natural Healing Center at 3701 Bee Caves Rd., Suite 102