

VISION ACCESS

**A Magazine by, for and about
People with Low Vision.**

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by the
Council of Citizens with Low Vision International,
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Vision Access welcomes submissions from people with low vision, from professionals such as ophthalmologists, optometrists, low vision specialists, and everyone with something substantive to contribute to the ongoing discussion of low vision and all of its ramifications.

Submissions are best made as attachments to email or may also be made in clear typescript.

Vision Access cannot assume responsibility for lost manuscripts. Deadlines for submissions are: April 1, August 1 and December 1.

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Editor's Corner

by Mike Keithley

Happy spring and welcome to Vision

Access! O I see, it's fall where you are in New Zealand. Nice, you're headed for cold weather, we're headed for hot. My wife and I prefer cool. Whatever the case, welcome!

President Sara Conrad writes in two places in this issue: her President's Message and the Where Are They Now columns. And we have a warm article from Antonio Vega (a CCLVI scholarship awardee) and his love affair with his growing career. And be sure to Check out Jim Jirak's convention article!

And please help Tom Lealos with his budding Koping column in Vision access. It promises to be a really cool

addition to the magazine.

We need feedback about content in Vision Access. Consider answering these questions:

- 1. What do you like about the magazine?**
- 2. What would you like to see in the magazine?**
- 3. What did you like about this issue?**
- 4. Any other comments or suggestions?**

Please send your answers to vaccess@cclvi.org, which is in the masthead.

Thank you.

President's Message

by Sara Conrad

Hello CCLVI,

Happy Spring! CCLVI had a great winter. I would like to take a minute to share our organization's progress throughout the winter months and a few notes about what is coming next.

Our committees worked hard

last winter! Our convention committee planned a fantastic lineup of events for July in Rochester. The fundraising committee ran our CCLVI merchandise campaign. I know I love my pink polo shirt and coffee mug! The scholarship and Genensky committees prepared applications that will be

reviewed this spring. All of our committees work hard to support our members in the low vision community. I would personally like to thank this year's committee chairs for their efforts. Thank you to Jim Jirak, Robert Spangler, Linda Allison, Patti Cox, Kathy Farina, Dr. Bill, Leslie Spoone, Cathy Schmidt Whitaker, Allen Casey, and Lorise Diamond along with our many committee members.

In February, I represented CCLVI at the ACB Leadership Meetings in Alexandria, Virginia. My Saturday was spent in the ACB Board Meeting. It has been an honor to serve the low vision community on this board for the past seven years. 2019-2020 will be my final year on ACB's board. I actively seek to bring concerns from our community to light in these meetings, so please continue dialogue with me about your concerns. The Sunday meetings were devoted to leadership, where most affiliate presidents and other leaders met. We talked about membership and fundraising issues, websites and technology, and public relations. On Monday, I attended the legislative seminar meetings where we heard from many speakers in the D.C. area. Three other

members of our board were present at these meetings, including Leslie Spoone, Patti Cox, and Rick Morin. I am confident that we will continue to use the things we learned to better CCLVI and its programs.

In the coming months, we will continue to look towards convention. I encourage all of you to consider attending the ACB convention in Rochester, New York this July for many fun CCLVI events. We will also conduct our annual business meeting at convention where we will have updates on the organization and will hold elections for some officer and board positions. I encourage you to think

about running for a leadership position if you wish to aid our great organization throughout the next two years.

As my first year as CCLVI President comes to a close, I want to personally thank all of you for your support this year. I love this group and am beyond blessed to support the low vision community in this way.

Best,

Sara Conrad
CCLVI President

CCLVI Fundraiser by Christine Chaikin

Show your organizational pride and spruce up your spring and summer wardrobe! The Tee Spot store has items with the CCLVI logo ready for spring and summer! The 11 ounce coffee mug is still available!

The polo shirt is available in a wide array of colors and sizes. We have added a hat and a visor, which are also available in many colors. Order now! The sale of these items benefit

CCLVI.

There are three convenient ways to order. Order online at www.theteespot.com/cclvi/s-hop/home

call (865) 539-8220 and someone will gladly describe items.

You can send an email to customerservice@theteespot.com.

Forty Years and Still Going Strong by Kathy Farina

CCLVI celebrates its fortieth anniversary in 2019. I was curious about how the organization was formed and about how we became the organization we are today. I spoke with several people, some who have been members from the beginning and some who are fairly new to CCLVI. A common theme in our conversations is that we all have one foot in the blind world and one foot in the sighted world. There is a constant struggle to fit into both worlds. CCLVI provides camaraderie and a way to exchange ideas with others who share the same challenge.

The Council of Citizens with

Low Vision received its charter at the ACB national convention in Grand Rapids Michigan in 1979. Encouragement and guidance for starting an affiliate for people with low vision came from Derward K. McDaniel and Eugene Apple, prominent members of The American Council of the Blind, who happened to be totally blind.

The 1990's were eventful years. The word "International" was added to our name to reflect the fact that CCLVI had several members from other countries besides the United States. Contests were held to develop a logo and to find a name for

our magazine. Teresa Blessing's entry, *Vision Access*, won first prize.

Over the years, programs such as the Fred Scheigert Scholarships, the Sam Genensky Video Magnifier Awards, Let's Talk Low Vision with Dr. Bill Takeshita. And publications like *Insights Into Low vision* and *Vision Access*, have helped CCLVI establish a niche in the low vision community. Today CCLVI has six affiliates.

What about the future of CCLVI? Richard Rueda, current Second Vice President and past President of CCLVI said, "My advice is for our leadership to be active listeners, both to our members and to those we are trying to recruit to our affiliate... in order to recruit folks old and young, we need to listen and learn to meet them where they are." Sara Conrad, our current President, agrees.

She would like to improve retention and recruitment of

members. "People with low vision have many choices of organizations to join and interests to pursue. We need to create reasons why CCLVI is a good option." Sara added that we need to work more closely with ACB" For instance, there should be more joint programming with other ACB affiliates at the national conference and convention. "Perhaps we can have more CCLVI representatives on committees and on the national ACB board of publications and board of directors."

Community outreach is another important project. Eye care professionals, senior centers, teachers of the visually impaired and families and friends need to know that CCLVI is a resource.

If you are at the ACB national conference and convention this July, help us celebrate by attending our anniversary party and other events. Stay tuned for the convention program for more details.

A Look Ahead to Rochester, NY

by Jim Jirak

The 2019 Council of Citizens with Low Vision International convention will be held in Rochester, NY from Friday July 5th through Wednesday, July 10th, in conjunction with the

American Council of the Blind, which concludes Friday, July 12th.

Two hotels will be utilized. They are the Hyatt Regency

Rochester and the Rochester Riverside Hotel. The room rates are the same at each property. Guide dog relief areas will be available at each hotel. If you use a guide dog and your dog prefers grass, the Riverside has a large grassy area just outside the front door.

The two hotels are across the street from each other. For safe and easy crossing, there is an audible pedestrian signal at the corner. You can also go between hotels via a walkway through the convention center where general sessions and exhibits will be held. Other activities will be held in both hotels.

The Riverside has a grab-and-go counter, and their restaurant is Rocburger, featuring build your own burgers, wings and decadent milkshakes! At the Hyatt you will find Starbucks, Morton's The Steakhouse (fine dining), and the Hyatt's restaurant The Street Craft Kitchen and Bar, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Although two hotels will be used and the convention center, walking will not be an issue since the spaces are compact, with no historical stairways.

The Rochester airport (ROC) is 10 minutes from the hotels,

and here are complimentary shuttle services to both hotels. The Amtrak station is six blocks away, as is the Greyhound bus station.

The shuttle will pick up at both these locations. Please keep in mind that the shuttle from the Rochester airport is complimentary to both hotels. Also, if traveling by car, parking at both hotels is \$4.00 a day. The Megabus stop is 10 blocks from the hotels.

In some instances you can find more nonstop flights to Buffalo and that in some cases the airfare is less expensive than flying to Rochester. If, after checking airfares, you decide flying into Buffalo might be more cost effective, here is some information regarding travel between Buffalo and Rochester. Buffalo is approximately 75 miles from Rochester. For information on the Megabus from Buffalo to Rochester visit ca.megabus.com/route-guides/buffalo-to-rochester-bus

Amtrak offers several trains per day between Buffalo and Rochester. For information contact (800) 872-7245 or www.amtrak.com/stations/roc

You can also contact Rochester Shuttle Express: (585) 663-3760 or rocshuttle.com. The shuttle is \$175 one way for

up to four people.

With that bit of information, your convention committee consisting of Madison Allen of Rosman NC; Patti Cox of Louisville KY; Zelda Gebhard of Edgely ND; Maureen Hayden of Houston TX; Richard Rueda of Sacramento CA and Amanda Selm of Louisville KY are to be congratulated on the time and effort spent to make CCLVI programming informative and fun. A special shout out to Madison and Maureen for their informative and fun. A special shout out to Madison and Maureen for their involvement so soon after being chosen as 2018 Fred Scheigert Scholarship recipients. Thank you both for your valued contributions.

So you can plan convention activities accordingly, please make note of the dates to keep in mind as well as the programming schedule shown below:

May 22: pre-registration opens exclusively for ACB members

May 27: pre-registration opens for non-ACB members

June 23: pre-registration closes

**CCLVI: Celebrating Forty Years of Low Vision Expertise. Sara Conrad, Madison WI
Registration: \$20 \$25**

Package: \$94 \$113

**Saturday, July 6 \$15 \$20
Scholarship mixer: 3:30-5:30 PM**

While reacquainting with old friends and making new, come meet the 2019 Fred Scheigert scholarship winners.

**Sunday, July 7
Low vision vender showcases:
1:15-2:30 PM**

Come see what is new as exhibitors demonstrate the latest in low vision technological advances.

**Anniversary party: 7-8 PM
Join CCLVI for our 40th anniversary celebration with all of the party fixing's including a cake and a cash bar.**

Test your knowledge at pre-game night trivia then stay for game night to follow.

**\$15 \$20 Game Night: 8-11 PM
After a busy day of information and networking, unwind and have some fun with general trivia through the decades. A cash bar will also be available for your enjoyment.**

**Monday, July 8
\$36 \$38 Luncheon: 12:15-2:30 PM**

Claire Stanley and Clark Rachfal discuss the importance of advocating for the inclusion of low vision devices as well as

diabetic equipment being covered by Medicare.

\$8 \$10 Smart home presentation with Next Generation: 2:45-4:00 PM
Have you ever imagined what life would be like in the future? It's 2019 and we are living in a world full of technology. Get ready to learn how to make your home run more efficient with innovative devices, and explore how they can make life easier for you. Discover a world you can control with voice commands and Smartphone apps.

Tuesday, July 9
CCLVI business meeting including elections and resolutions: 1:30-4 PM.

Wednesday, July 10 concludes with an open house. The time and location will be published in the convention newsletter as well as announced on the convention floor.

Opening general session for the American Council of the Blind will be Saturday evening, July 6th. Daily general sessions will be held Sunday through Wednesday mornings, and their final general session, which will include officer elections, will be Thursday the 11th.

The exhibit hall is open Saturday through Wednesday. All-day tours will be offered on

Friday the 5th and Friday the 12th, with many other tours throughout the convention. See the current tour schedule below. For more complete tour information, including prices per person, visit acb.org/2019-convention-tour-preview.

On Friday, July 5th, tours include a trip to the Genesee Country Village, a city bus tour, and a dinner cruise on the Colonial Belle. The Genesee Country Village is not wheelchair-accessible.

Saturday's tours include a trip to the Baseball Hall of Fame (lots of walking in crowded conditions) and two city bus tours (no stops, no walking).

Sunday's tour is a trip to Leroy, N.Y. to visit the Jell-O Gallery, Leroy House and the Museum of Transportation. Portions this tour are not wheelchair-accessible; it involves a considerable amount of walking.

Monday's tours include a trip to the Corning Museum of Glass and Cugini Café (lots of walking), one to the Strong Museum of Play (lots of walking), the sweet tooth tour to Laughing Gull Chocolates, and a trip to Batavia Downs Casino.

Tuesday's tours include an

adult beverage tour (bring your ID), the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum (not wheelchair-accessible), and the Memorial Art Gallery.

The post-convention tour on Friday, July 12th, is to Niagara Falls. It's an all-day tour with a lot of walking (approximately 2 miles), steps, and slippery surfaces. There are no seats on the Maid of the Mist boat; you must have good balance for this tour.

Finally, the American Council of the Blind welcomes Ginny Owens, songwriter and performer as the keynote speaker and entertainer at the 2019 banquet in Rochester NY on Thursday, July 11th. Ginny has graciously provided the following information:

"A multiple award-winning and critically-acclaimed singer-songwriter, Ginny Owens became a household name when she was named the Gospel Music Association's "New Artist of the Year" in 2000. In a meaningful career that now encompasses nearly stages, including the Sundance Film Festival, Lilith Fair and the White House, and recordings that transcend genre expectations.

"In November 2016, Owens launched the Love Be the Loudest campaign, an initiative

Wednesday's tours include a trip to the New York School for the Blind, George Eastman House, and a repeat of the sweet tooth tour.

two decades of music – including 10 full-length recordings, three EPs, a popular Christmas album, number one radio singles, and numerous film and television placements – Ginny's heartbeat behind the music remains the same – to inspire others through sharing her own story in song.

"Born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, a degenerative eye condition left Ginny completely blind by the tender age of three. As her vision diminished, her love of music and the piano expanded, and Ginny discovered songwriting as a window into her unseen world. The unique perspectives inspired by her vision impairment have resulted in inspirational lyrics paired with her diverse musicianship to afford her a space on an even more diverse set of in which a portion of album sales are donated to increasing the work of non-profit organizations whose mission is to bring hope to the world.

"In 2017, the sought-after songstress was commissioned to write the song, "Fly Away,"

for the independent film, **Trafficked** – a song that found itself among the selections considered for the Academy Awards ballot for Best Original Song in a Motion Picture earlier this year. Ginny is also an author, co-authoring **Transcending Mysteries**, published by HarperCollins in 2015, and the multi-faceted performer also hosts a popular video blog entitled, "How I See

It," in which Owens helps viewers understand the ins-and-outs of living day-to-day life as a blind person.

"For more information on Ginny, or her philanthropic work with Love Be the Loudest, visit GinnyOwens.com and LoveBeTheLoudest.com."

Where Are They Now? by Allen Casey

Continuing a feature launched in the previous Vision Access, we present career updates from two CCLVI Scheigert scholarship recipients from the past - Antonio Vega and Sara Conrad. Both Antonio and Sara received graduate scholarships and are in the early years of their professional careers after completing their respective post-graduate studies. Enjoy their stories.

Sara J. Conrad

"I speak not for myself but for those without voice ... those who have fought for their rights ... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated."

Malala Yousafzai said these

words in response to her education advocacy work in Pakistan. I wrote these same words as the first part of my personal statement when applying to law school. I was the girl who, on graduation day, bedazzled her hat with the Bible verse Proverbs 31:8-9: "Speak out for the voiceless and for the rights of all who are vulnerable. Speak out in order to judge with rightness and to defend the needy."

In both of these situations, I knew what I wanted; I wanted to keep the mental image of my literally voiceless students from when I taught special education. I wanted to keep that picture in my mind as I learned to advocate for their specific needs. But the journey of attending, overcoming and completing law school as a

young woman with her own disabilities proved to be a part of what I needed to achieve my goal.

I am legally blind with some usable vision in my left eye and no usable vision in my right. I travel with an adorable golden retriever from the Seeing Eye, although I do routes with land without my white cane at times to ensure my own independence. I received my dog guide shortly before starting law school.

This was a huge step for me. I knew I would benefit from her guidance in the larger city living, but I was nervous to take the plunge. For someone with usable vision, it was a plunge into the blindness world. It was a plunge that labels me as a blinder person than a sighted person. But in the end I knew it was best for me.

This led to three years of law school, where I learned who I would become, not only as a lawyer but also, and maybe even more so, as a person. My identity shifted in law school. I became comfortable in being visually impaired. I learned to have ease with being different. I had to stop feeling awkward about asking for accommodations, as if I was a burden to the professor. I had to reconcile the unfairness of

extra hours of reading when my peers were already finished. I had to learn to proudly walk into the courtroom with a golden retriever with confidence and grace.

The journey to this learning was full of struggle, mostly mentally, but it emerged a voice I did not know I had inside of me. It is a voice that can speak even stronger for others because of the deep empathy I can now add to advocacy.

You can't advocate well if you don't "get it." We see this every day in the visually impaired community. People don't usually "get it." They complain about dog hair in an Uber, grab a blind person's arm suddenly to guide them without consent, or limit their expectations of someone with low vision. But this also happens in other fields. Take for instance my field of working with children. There are constantly leaders making decisions about public education who have never set foot in a public school. There are people in society who view children with cognitive disabilities as less than "normal" students. We see this all the time.

My journey of becoming me, the visually impaired guide dog

user who is now President of a fabulous low vision organization, prepared and continues to prepare me for advocacy of all kinds. I now work in administrative law and policy for the Wisconsin State government's Department of Children and Families. I advocate for the needs of kids every day, including access to early learning, financial help, and trauma support.

Could I do this job without the journey? Yes. I could write regulations and policy. I could edit documents and publish operations memos. I could even still care about the mission of our department. But I could not "get it." I could not sit here in my office chair envisioning the children I serve with the deep understanding of struggle. I might be just as good at my job on paper without these experiences, but I would lack the heart for all I do. The journey of becoming an identified person with a disability gives me the ability to see far more about these kids than I otherwise could.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank CCLVI for the opportunity to feel connected with like-minded colleagues and friends along this journey. You all "get it," too. Together, we can continue learning and growing to be voices where there is no sound. We can

speak up for those in need and empower others to speak for themselves. That is my calling in life, and I look forward to continuing that work with you.

Antonio Vega

Life can be wonderfully unpredictable. You set out to do one thing and before something you never imagined you would be doing, and loving it. That's definitely the case for me. In the summer of 2014, when I set out to start work on a master's in Japanese Language and Linguistics, I did it with the full intention of eventually becoming a Japanese teacher. However today I am the editor-in-chief of a magazine published in Hawaii. Though I never thought that this is where I would end up, I am genuinely happy and think things turned out for the better. Before I get into all the details of what I'm up to now though, it seems like I should rewind a bit and explain how I got to this point in my life.

To say I learned a great deal during my time as a graduate student at the University of Hawaii would be an understatement. The amount of work that went into obtaining my M.A. really forced me to grow as a person and fundamentally changed the way I look at how people

communicate and use language. Simply put, it was a truly valuable experience. Nevertheless, by 2016 when I graduated I was quite certain that I did not want to pursue a doctorate. As much as I love learning, I knew that moving on to the PhD program would entail another several years of doing intense research on some obscure topic, and I was ready to move on to something else.

Just like I had originally planned before starting work on my master's degree, I began to look for positions teaching Japanese, but I couldn't find anything stable. This led me to consider other options, and so after much thought and research, I decided to go into speech pathology. The choice seemed like a good one. After all I like teaching, have a background in linguistics and enjoy helping people. So I began taking the pre-requisite classes for the speech pathology graduate program, while at the same time working on my application for admission into the actual graduate program.

Not long after starting down the path to become a speech pathologist, I also began a blog called Japankyo.com in my free time. There I would write articles on obscure Japanese news and videos that had not been covered in the

English-speaking world. In the span of a few months, I broke several stories that got picked up by major websites, and little by little the blog grew.

Eventually I got called in for an interview as part of the application process for the speech pathology master's program. I went in for the interview and thought it went pretty well, but I also knew that I should not assume anything. The speech pathology program at the University of Hawaii is highly competitive, so I understood that there was still a very good chance that I wouldn't be admitted into it.

After a period of many weeks, I finally got the letter that would decide my fate. I opened the envelope, pulled out the letter and fired up my magnifier. As you've probably already figured out, I did not get accepted.

My rejection was not devastating, but it did force me to rethink things. My financial concerns were growing by the day, so I couldn't just wait around another year in order to reapply to the University of Hawaii. Thankfully it was right around this time when a former classmate and good friend, who was still in the Japanese department at the University of Hawaii working

on her PhD, contacted me. While conducting research on Japanese-language media in Hawaii, she had heard that a company in Honolulu publishing a Japanese Language newspaper was looking for someone to work on an English-language publication they were trying to launch. My friend knew I ran a blog, so she thought I might be a good fit for the job. Although she wasn't able to tell me much about what exactly the job was, I figured it wouldn't hurt to try. So I contacted the company and went in for an interview. The owner of the company interviewed me. I showed him my blog and he seemed to enjoy it. We talked and things seemed to go well. The interview ended with an invitation to join him the following day. He and a writer were going to go interview a local filmmaker for an article. I went and at the end of the interview he asked me if I'd write an article based on the interview. I did and that article eventually evolved into the cover story of the first issue of Wasabi, the magazine of which I'm now editor-in-chief.

Since July of 2017 I have been spending my days editing articles, writing articles,

interviewing people, assigning stories to writers, planning out content for the magazine, answering a never-ending stream of emails, and doing a bunch of other random things. Even though I am very busy, I really enjoy it. Because Wasabi focuses on Japanese things in both Japan and Hawaii, I'm getting to use all the knowledge and expertise that I've gained over the years. I also get to use Japanese on a daily basis since everyone I work with in my office is Japanese. Further, I often get to interview prominent individuals from Japan, so on those occasions I also use Japanese. When I'm not doing work things, I write for my blog and last year I also launched a podcast called Japan Station to go along with that blog. Outside of all that, I'm also a board member of the Hawaii Association of the Blind.

All in all, things are going very well for me. I feel very fortunate to be where I am today. Therefore I'd like to close by expressing my gratitude to CCLVI and, of course, Fred Scheigert. It's because of the financial support of organizations like CCLVI that people like me are able to do things they love, so thank you and please keep investing in people's futures.

"Kopings"

by Tom Lealos

I'm all in with, and applaud people who help people cope with their problems. To this end I had the bright idea to write a regular column for Vision Access that would focus on sharing our successes and victories with each other as we struggle with our vision loss. Our editor thought this idea may have some merit, so here we go.

I was thinking that a good title for this column would be "Kopings" and would feature one of our members in every edition as long as I could get you all to share your stories. It would take on the look of a low vision support group without the face-to-face contact. Since everyone has different challenges and personal strengths I'm anticipating that there would be something to learn from every column.

The mechanics would involve me interviewing members who might volunteer initially and then moving on to me contacting willing individuals to chronicle their struggles as time went on. Important information would include such things as name, city/state,

job/profession, age, vision problem, home hazards, tips, employment issues, ideas, small victories, demons met and tamed, organizations contacted for help, equipment and gadgets used, special training, or anything else that you have to offer. There just may be that one minor problem that you

struggled with and mastered, which seemed insignificant to you at the time, that would be a big help to someone else.

So then, at this time I would invite volunteers to contact me for interviews by phone at (307) 764-3664 or by email at twlealos47@gmail.com. When I run out of volunteers I'll be contacting members for interviews, with your permission, of course.

This effort can only be successful if you, the members, are willing to share your vision loss experiences and knowledge with each other. This has the potential of being informative, useful, and lots of fun. What do we have to lose?

I look forward to hearing from you.

NEI NEWS

compiled by Mike Keithley

Imaging Method Reveals Long-lived Patterns In Cells of the Eye: Technique could aid early detection and treatment of certain eye diseases.

Cells of the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) form unique patterns that can be used to track changes in this important layer of tissue in the back of the eye, researchers at the National Eye Institute (NEI) have found. Using a combination of adaptive optics imaging and a fluorescent dye, the researchers used the RPE patterns to track individual cells in healthy volunteers and people with retinal disease. The new finding could provide a way to study the progression and treatment of blinding diseases that affect the RPE. The study was published today in the journal JCI Insight. NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"Studying cells of the retinal pigment epithelium in the clinic is like looking into a black box. RPE cells are difficult to see, and by the time signs of disease are detectable with conventional techniques, a lot of damage has often already occurred," said Johnny Tam, Ph.D., the lead author of the study. "This study is proof-of-concept that we can use a fluorescent dye to reveal this unique fingerprint of the RPE, and to monitor the tissue over time."

The RPE is a cell layer that lies next to and maintains the health of the retina's light-sensing photoreceptors. Because the cells contain pigment, and thus absorb incoming light, the thin layer of RPE tissue is difficult to image. Even using adaptive optics, a specialized

imaging technology that can distinguish individual cells in the eye, Tam and colleagues found visualizing the RPE layer challenging.

So, Tam turned to an FDA-approved fluorescent dye called indocyanine green (ICG) that is used to visualize the blood vessels in the back of the eye. While the dye fades from

the blood vessels quickly, within about thirty minutes, the dye persists in the RPE for several hours, revealing a fluorescent mosaic pattern, with some cells appearing more

brightly and others more dimly.

"Initially, we didn't know how the dye was going to look," said Tam. "We put the dye in and we got this pattern that at first looked kind of random. It was a big surprise that we could come back after a year, re-inject the dye, and see the same pattern."

Tam and colleagues designed software that recognizes RPE patterns and then computes changes that occur from one imaging session to the next. For healthy volunteers, there was very little change in the RPE over several months, with the vast majority of the cells retaining a stable amount of ICG staining. To find out whether this technique could detect the early stages of damage to the RPE, Tam and colleagues also imaged the eyes of people with conditions that can affect that part of the eye. First, Tam imaged the retinas of a patient with late-onset retinal degeneration (L-ORD), a condition that is thought to affect the RPE in later stages of the disease. The researchers found that the mosaic pattern of the RPE in a patient in the earlier stages of L-ORD was only slightly less stable than in healthy eyes, showing relatively minor changes in a few areas of the retina.

Second, the researchers imaged the eyes of a patient with Bietti crystalline dystrophy (BCD), a disease that causes progressive loss of RPE cells. Adaptive optics with ICG dye revealed not only that RPE cells in the patient with BCD were larger and less well organized than healthy cells at all time points, but also that there were drastic changes in the RPE mosaic pattern over time.

While this study uses adaptive optics imaging, Tam believes that, with additional efforts, it will be possible to image this RPE mosaic pattern with conventional imaging methods. Being able to visualize this pattern over time will help researchers better understand how the RPE layer changes over time, and eventually help guide the development of new treatments to prevent damage to or repair the RPE.

"When treating patients, a lot of decisions are based on what we see. For the parts of the eye we can't see, we're often treating blindly," said Tam. For diseases that affect the RPE, which has traditionally been really difficult to image, "this technique will show us what's happening in the tissue over time, helping us develop new treatments for these conditions," he added.

This study was funded by the NEI Intramural Research Program.

NIH Study Finds No Evidence That Calcium Increases Risk of AMD: People taking the mineral for other medical reasons should stay the course.

Eating a calcium-rich diet or taking calcium supplements does not appear to increase the risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), according to the findings of a study by scientists at the National Eye Institute (NEI). AMD is a leading cause of vision loss and blindness among people age 65 and older in the United States. The study findings are published in JAMA Ophthalmology. Calcium-rich foods include milk, yogurt and cheese, as well as non-dairy sources such as kale, white beans and sesame seeds.

The findings contradict an earlier study indicating that high levels of calcium were associated with increased prevalence of AMD, but they are consistent with another suggesting that calcium has a protective role in AMD.

"Although the findings suggest that high calcium intake may be protective, the jury is still out on whether people should alter their calcium intake to prevent the onset or

progression of AMD," said the study's lead investigator, Emily Chew, M.D., director of the Division of Epidemiology and Clinical Applications and the deputy clinical director at NEI, which is part of the National Institutes of Health.

"These latest findings provide no evidence that there is a need to change the management of calcium intake for individuals who are already taking calcium for other medical indications," Chew said.

An estimated 50 percent of men and 65 percent of women in the United States regularly use calcium supplements, which in addition to building strong bones and teeth, are commonly used to prevent and treat osteoporosis. Recommended daily amounts of calcium are 1,000 mg for adults 50 and younger and 1,200 mg for those older than 50.

Chew and colleagues investigated the relationship between calcium intake, by diet

and/or supplements, and AMD onset, or its progression. They analyzed data from a previous investigation known as the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS). That landmark multicenter trial funded by the NEI assessed a range of nutrients and their effects on onset and progression of AMD and cataract.

Focusing specifically on calcium, these latest findings looked retrospectively at 4,751 AREDS participants who had been followed for an average of 10 years. Self-reports of calcium intake were collected using a questionnaire asking about the frequency with which people ate calcium-rich foods and whether they regularly used calcium supplements in the past year. At baseline, participants had no AMD, intermediate AMD (large deposits known as drusen in the retina of both eyes), or late-stage AMD in one eye.

As participants got older, an association between calcium intake and AMD risk reduction emerged. People with the

highest intake of calcium from dietary or supplement sources had a lower risk of developing late-stage AMD compared with those in the lowest calcium intake groups.

Chew emphasized that this suggestion of a benefit from calcium could be due to confounding factors. For example, people who are mindful to maximize their calcium intake may be more likely to also eat a healthy diet, exercise and take prescribed medications, all of which could also lower AMD risk.

Most importantly, the findings underscore the need for prospective investigations to resolve the issue of whether calcium is protective against AMD, and whether calcium intake impacts the development of drusen or the different subtypes of AMD, Chew said.

For more information about AMD, visit nei.nih.gov/health/maculardegen.

Severe Eye Condition Caused by Over the Counter Cold Medicines by Jessica Dupnack, WJBK

Source:

www.fox7austin.com/facebook-instant/severe-eye-condition-caused-by-over-the-counter-cold-medicines

Imagine waking up to blurry vision and excruciating eye pain. Then your eye care professional says it's the cold

medicine that your taking that's causing this pain and a form of Glaucoma.

It's more common than you think and most of us haven't even heard of the warnings. by Taboola

"We've literally had patients laying on the floor in pain," said Dr. Les Siegel with Glaucoma Centers of Michigan.

Dr. Les Siegel is talking about patients with Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma.

"According to patients that have had acute angle closure it's one of the most painful events that they can have," Dr. Siegel said. It's brought on by a type of ingredient found in most cold and allergy medicines even some antibiotics and anti-depressants.

It causes your eyes to dilate which can trap fluid between the iris and cornea causing the pressure to build, then the pain.

"If it's not treated appropriately you can lose your vision in the eye permanently," said Dr. Siegel.

This can happen to anyone with the use of cold meds but it hits people more often in their 50s and older, and people with

what's called narrow angles meaning a smaller area between your iris and cornea. Most people don't have a clue if they have narrow angles or not.

"Often times they think they have sinus problems, or migraine headaches, or something else until its really severe," he said.

The only way you can find out is to be examined by an eye care professional.

If you get this form of Glaucoma the only solution is a needle in your eye, literally.

"We insert a very small needle into the eye and that will break the attack by lowering the pressure in the eye," Dr. Siegel said.

Take this as a warning from Dr. Siegel this cold and flu season.

"If you should be taking this medication or any other medication and notice you are feeling pressure or discomfort around your eyes you should stop it and see an eye care professional."

Check your labels, look for warnings that say not to take or consult a doctor if you have Glaucoma, and get your eyes checked to see if you're at high risk.

Request for Contributions

CCLVI gratefully accepts contributions from readers and members to help pay for the costs of publishing Vision Access and other programs of CCLVI.

Please send contributions to:

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Vision Access welcomes submissions from people with low vision, from professionals such as ophthalmologists, optometrists, low vision specialists, and everyone with something substantive to contribute to the ongoing discussion of low vision and all of its ramifications.

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