

MEDICAL NEWS

First time in U.S.: Genetic testing available for macular degeneration

A new test has been created to determine the inherited risk for age-related macular degeneration. The painless test, Macula Risk, was developed by a leading geneticist and an international group of independent research scientists.

David C. Brown, M.D., founder and medical director of Eye Centers of Florida, and Greg Hines, president and CEO of ArcticDX Inc., said analytical studies have shown the test to be 100 percent accurate in identifying the AMD genes.

"AMD is the leading cause of blindness in the western world among individuals over 50 years of age," said Dr. Brown.

Current estimates suggest that more than 10 million people in the U.S. suffer vision loss as a result of this disease. More people have AMD than breast cancer, prostate cancer, Parkinson's and

Alzheimer's disease combined.

AMD is a progressive disease associated with aging that destroys sight by creating dim images or black holes in the center of your vision. Advanced AMD, which may develop rapidly, can impair the ability to perform common tasks such as reading, driving or watching television. Once significant vision is lost, it cannot be restored and, if untreated, AMD will ultimately lead to blindness.

Seventy-five to 80 percent of all cases of AMD have been traced to genes inherited from a family member. Until recently there was no opportunity to determine who may carry these genes or be at risk.

"Individuals with a family history of macular degeneration may have early signs of the disease and not be aware of



COURTESY PHOTO

David C. Brown

it," said Mr. Hines. "For those with early disease, Macula Risk will tell them if they are likely to progress to vision loss so that they can seek professional support from their eye care center."

Eye Centers of Florida is well equipped to offer a disease management program aimed at saving the sight of those at risk. Eye Centers now offers Macula Risk, a CLIA certified saliva test to anyone who is concerned about a family member or themselves. The test is recommended for adults as a once in a lifetime test.

Eye Centers of Florida, founded by Dr. Brown, M.D., in 1982, is a nationally recognized, progressive eye care center providing complete vision care to individuals throughout Southwest Florida. For more information, visit www.ecof.com. ■

New physicians join Lee Memorial Health System staff

Lee Memorial Health System announced the following physicians joined the medical staff during the month of February:

Catherine Moon, Ph.D. - Psychology - Dr. Moon obtained her degree from the University of Alabama and completed a post-doctoral residency at Hendry-Glades Mental Health Center. She is a bi-lingual psychologist in Hendry County at the Psychology Center of LaBelle.

Shaun O'Neal, Psy.D. - Psychology - Dr. O'Neal obtained his degree at Alliant International University. He completed a Psychology Internship at Dorothea Dix Hospital and a post-doctoral residency at the Institute of Living. Dr. O'Neal has joined Lee Memory Care.

Jonathan Robbins, Psy.D. - Psychology - Dr. Robbins obtained his degree from Carlos Albizu University. He completed a Clinical Psychology Internship at the Children's Psychiat-

ric Center and a Psychology Residency at The Bertha Abess Children's Center. Dr. Robbins has joined Associates in Family Psychology.

Neil Staib, M.D. - Teleradiology - Dr. Staib obtained his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He completed an Internship at Christ Hospital and a Diagnostic Radiology Residency at University Hospital, Cincinnati. Dr. Staib is certified by the American

Board of Radiology and has joined Virtual Radiologic Consultants.

Harry Turner, M.D. - Radiology - Dr. Turner obtained his medical degree at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. He completed a Radiology Residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and an Interventional & Body Imaging Fellowship at Lehigh Valley Hospital. Dr. Turner is certified by the American Board of Radiology and has joined Radiology Regional. ■



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