



MACULAR
DEGENERATION
NEW ZEALAND

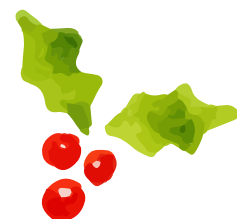
Viewpoint

The MDNZ Newsletter
Issue 9 – December 2017

0800 MACULA
(0800 622 852) info@mdnz.org.nz

Season's Greetings from MDNZ

As 2017 draws to a close we take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters and to wish you all a joyous Christmas and happy holidays.



In this issue of Viewpoint you will read about:

- The Vision for 2020 campaign
- Two inspiring stories of living with macular degeneration
- How to purchase Christmas cards that will help save sight.
- RANZCO Distinguished Service medal for our MDNZ founder
- An Amsler Grid to check your vision
- Understanding nutrition and supplements to support eye health
- How now is a good time to send your postcard to MPs
- Video links to view over the holidays
- How you can help and become involved

MDNZ could not achieve what we do without people who are committed to helping save sight.

Thank you all – Ambassadors flying our flag whenever they can; Trustees past and present providing governance and guidance; four part-time staff totalling the equivalent of 2.6 full-time hours; office and seminar volunteers plus an intern this year; ophthalmologists around the country who volunteer to deliver presentations and their staff who turn up on their weekends to help and many advocates who have worked tirelessly with government and agencies on our behalf.

Christmas greetings and happy holidays to you all.



“Don’t delay” is the message from Don

Every day for the past 60 years, 88 year old Don Stewart has been at his Piccadilly Arcade jewellery shop in Tauranga. Don says he can’t see very well but that doesn’t stop him from doing lots. He also has a hearing aid but reckons everything below neck level is still working perfectly well!

Don didn’t know about macular degeneration until he was diagnosed aged 80 – he was seeing flashing red lights in his right eye. Don was told he needed an injection directly into his eye or he would go blind. He says that while people cringe at the thought of an injection in the eye, it is not painful. The idea is painful, the procedure is not, as the doctor deadens the eye and then goes through the procedure. His right eye had scarring so they couldn’t salvage it. He can see the periphery but can’t see the centre and might have lost his sight completely had he not had the injections.

Don still had his left eye so he could drive and work until one day he went into the shop, opened the mail and couldn’t read it. So it was back to the clinic smartly. Don’s left eye has improved greatly which has enabled him to continue his profession some 23 years after he could have retired.

Don says, “You may think you just need new glasses but see your doctor, get to the clinic – don’t delay”.



“I wish you’d have made your appointment a little sooner.”

It’s not too late to order Christmas cards

With Christmas approaching, please purchase your personal and corporate Christmas cards with The Giving Tree. For each card purchased, The Giving Tree donates 50 cents to MDNZ to raise awareness and provide education and support to the macular degeneration community across NZ.



The Giving Tree: locally made and designed Christmas cards supporting MDNZ. Let this Christmas truly be a time of giving.

View this year's range at www.thegivingtree.co.nz



Congratulations to Dr Dianne Sharp

At the annual Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) Scientific Congress in Perth Australia in November, Macular Degeneration New Zealand's founding chairperson and Auckland Ophthalmologist, Dr Dianne Sharp was awarded the RANZCO Distinguished Service Medal for her outstanding contribution to ophthalmology.

RANZCO defines this award as for contributions to the College, Ophthalmology or Community that exhibit such exceptional devotion of time, effort, thought, and action as to set them apart from other contributions.

The nominator for this award described Dr Sharp's crowning achievement being the creation of Macular Degeneration NZ (MDNZ). She initiated the concept then rallied support of ophthalmologists, optometrists, the Blind Foundation, members of the macular degeneration community, sports celebrities and business leaders to bring this about. Under her leadership, MDNZ has made significant progress raising awareness and support throughout NZ. Her energy and tireless work has been an inspiration to others. She is trusted and respected by the public, sponsors, colleagues and the wider eye care community as she has led from the front.

Dr Sharp helped form the NZ Retinitis Pigmentosa Society and was instrumental in establishing vision assessment, low vision and electrodiagnostic clinics at Auckland Hospital. Dr Sharp has been a leading lobbyist for public funded treatment for macular degeneration and is currently lobbying PHARMAC for funding of anti-VEGF agents and the Ministry of Health for the Model of Care for macular degeneration. The Model of Care incorporates prevention and early detection, intravitreal anti-VEGF treatment and low vision rehabilitation. She has also contributed enthusiastically to trainee teaching and is co-author of a number of scientific publications.

Dr Sharp is indeed worthy of this award. MDNZ wholeheartedly congratulates Dr Sharp on the award and thanks her for her vision and tireless effort in promoting eye health, advocating for patients living with macular degeneration and bringing about changes that result in improved sight.

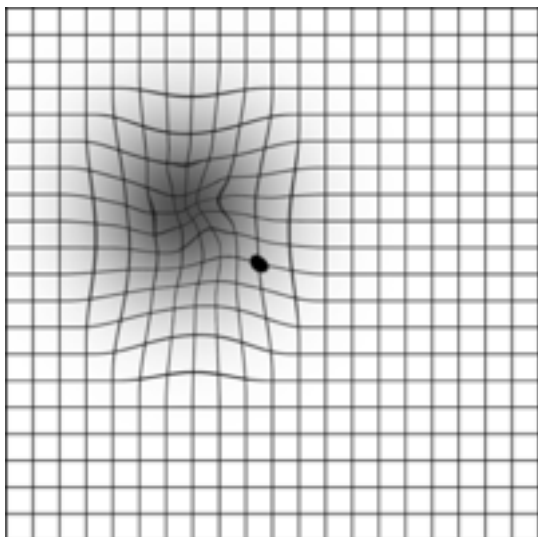
It's not a printing error, it's Macular Degeneration



Macular degeneration can cause different symptoms in different people and can be hardly noticeable in its early stages.

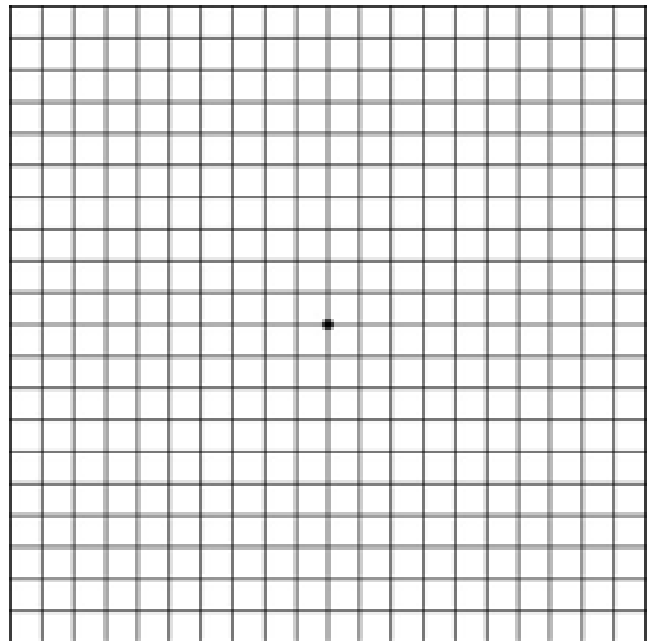
Symptoms include

- Central or detailed vision being blocked with dark or empty spaces
- Images becoming blurry
- Straight lines appearing distorted or wavy
- Colours being hard to distinguish



The Amsler Grid can pick up early signs of vision loss. Try the test with the grid on the right to see if you may be affected. Only an examination by a qualified eye care professional can properly diagnose macular degeneration, so please contact your doctor or optometrist if you notice symptoms of this condition.

Do you have Macular Degeneration?



Take this simple test

1. Do not remove glasses or contact lens you normally use for reading
2. Hold this grid at eye level, about 35cm from your face
3. Cover one eye with your hand and focus on the centre dot with your uncovered eye
4. Repeat with the other eye
5. If you see wavy, broken or distorted lines, or blurred or missing areas of vision, you may be displaying the symptoms of macular degeneration. Contact your doctor or optometrist immediately

Take this simple test regularly so that you become familiar with what is normal vision for you. If you see sudden or definite changes contact your doctor or optometrist immediately.

To receive a copy of an Amsler Grid card with a magnet on the back to affix to your refrigerator please call us on **0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)**.

Eye Injections combat Macular Degeneration

Judith's story

For four years, Judith Ellis has had to have injections in her eyes to combat macular degeneration. Now she's encouraging others with eye trouble to act fast, no matter how small the problem may seem.

"My dad had MD for 20 years and they didn't have any help for it in those days" Judith says. My mum, at age 64, got her license because he couldn't drive and drove him for those twenty years all around New Zealand."

"Having known it was in my genes, I always had regular eye tests. Then one day I noticed a fault in my right eye, something that looked like a dot."

"When this happened with my sight, I got it checked straight away and they sent me immediately to the Hamilton Eye Clinic. It was discovered that the blood vessel behind the eye had burst and that was wet macular degeneration"

For four years Judith has been having intravitreal injections in her eyes every seven weeks. Drops are first put in to anaesthetise the eyes. Her vision returns to normal after five hours but it can take up to 48 hours to feel normal again. She said "sometimes I don't even feel it. Other times I do. It's relatively painless but it does vary from time to time."

"There's no cure, you can only be treated. But the injections have been extremely successful and I can still drive, still carry on with normal things."



"My advice to anyone is, if you find anything that's untoward with your eyes, get them checked immediately because it's so well worth it".

Judith says she has had the best of treatment and was warned that if she hadn't had it, she would be blind in her right eye by now.





MACULAR
DEGENERATION
NEW ZEALAND

VISION FOR
2020

Vision for 2020 Campaign

In October MDNZ launched the Vision for 2020 Campaign. This new initiative will save sight for New Zealanders. In the next three years, with your help, we aim to make significant inroads in reducing the incidence and impact of macular degeneration.

At the launch held at the Kelliher Trust Art Gallery, supporters were encouraged to view the landscape art through glasses that simulated vision loss from macular degeneration, in order to understand the life-shattering effects of the disease.

MDNZ's ambassador **Viv Jones recalled her journey from devastation to hope.**

Viv was diagnosed with macular degeneration and immediately began preparing for early retirement with an expectation of further vision loss leading to blindness. Then came access to treatment which not only halted Viv's vision loss but improved her vision so much that Viv gained her independence back. She could even drive again!

Viv was so passionate about helping others to avoid the devastation of vision loss that she threw her efforts into founding MDNZ. That was 8 years ago, and thanks to our supporters and donors, MDNZ has come a long way, **making a measurable difference by raising awareness of this terrible disease.**

The Problem

We are not there yet. **600,000 people in New Zealand are still at risk of going blind from macular degeneration** because they don't know about the disease.

- **Macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in people over 50 in New Zealand**
- **1 in 7 people over 50 year of age in New Zealand will get this disease**
- **1.5 million New Zealanders are at risk, rising to 1.8 million by 2026**
- **41% of New Zealanders in the at-risk group, do not know about macular degeneration. That is 615,000 people in New Zealand who are unaware of this disease**
- **A Deloitte Report (Oct 16) estimated that macular degeneration is currently present in 218,987 New Zealanders**

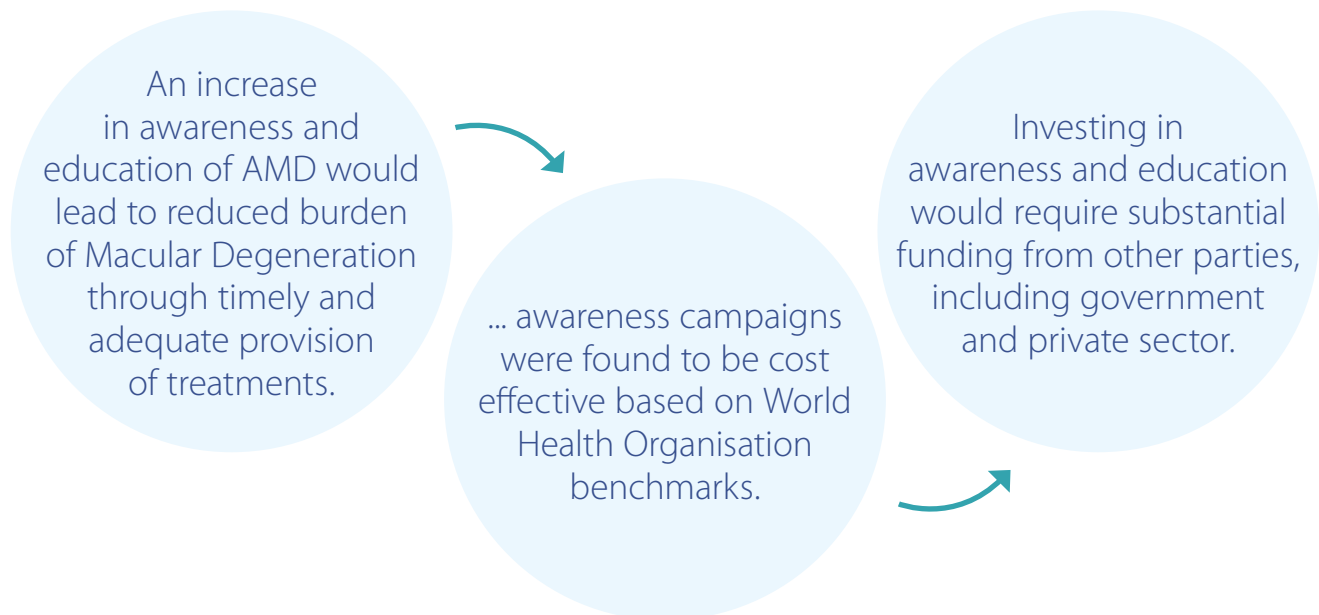
The cost in 2016 of macular degeneration to New Zealand was \$391 million.¹

¹ The Deloitte Access Economics Report on the "Socioeconomic cost of macular degeneration in New Zealand"

The Solution: Education & Awareness

- The Deloitte Report states that a \$2.8 million investment in macular degeneration awareness will save over \$70 million a year. The Report shows that **the economic, social and personal cost of the status quo is too big to ignore.**

The Report concludes:



- Awareness in Australia is high (88%). They are world leaders in vision outcomes and saving sight for those with macular degeneration. Australia has proven that awareness raising works.
- In order to make a real and significant difference, MDNZ needs to invest substantially in education and awareness.

The Vision for 2020 Campaign aims to:

Raise at least \$150,000 per year for 3 years so that MDNZ can employ educators around the country to raise awareness from 59% to 80% of New Zealanders over 50 years old.

This will save sight

The Campaign is bold and ambitious but the results will be transformational.

The Vision for 2020 Campaign, is a bold and transformational commitment to save sight. One generous donor has already donated \$25,000 each year for three years to kick-start the campaign.

MDNZ Chairman, Henry Ford, is calling on all MDNZ's supporters to **invest in the wellbeing of our communities by getting involved however they can in the Vision for 2020 Campaign. Every contribution will count.**

Nutrition and supplements supporting eye health



Macular Degeneration New Zealand (MDNZ) receives many questions about nutrition and supplements. This includes numerous enquiries about various websites claiming to offer miracle cures for macular degeneration. It is important to know the facts in order to avoid misleading advertising and false claims. We trust this article dispels myths and provides you with guidance on nutrition for eye health, including supplementing your diet.

The key eye health practices to follow include:

- Eat a healthy well-balanced diet
- Eat leafy green vegetables and fresh fruit daily
- Eat fish 2-3 times a week
- Choose low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates instead of high GI
- Eat a handful of nuts each week
- Limit intake of fats and oils
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, control weight and exercise regularly
- Consider taking a supplement in consultation with your doctor.

The Age Related Eye Disease Studies (AREDS 1 and 2) are two major clinical trials conducted by the National Eye Institute in the USA. The initial study in 2006 followed 3640 individuals for an average of 6.3 years between 1992 and 2001. In 2006, the AREDS group began a second study called AREDS2 to determine if the AREDS formulation could be improved.

The formulation of supplements (vitamins and minerals) that plays an important role in eye health is outlined in the ideal daily AREDS formula:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| • Zinc (as zinc oxide) | 80 mg |
| • Copper (as copper oxide) | 2 mg |
| • Vitamin E | 400 IU |
| • Vitamin C | 500 mg |
| • Lutein | 10 mg |
| • Zeaxanthin | 2 mg |

Diet and supplements are not to be confused as a cure for macular degeneration.

The AREDS identified the impact of taking the AREDS formula as:

- Those with intermediate stage MD reduced their risk by approximately 25%
- Those with late stage MD and loss of vision in one eye reduced their risk of developing severe changes in their other eye by approximately 20%.

The MDNZ brochure “Nutrition and Supplements” provides further information, including the vitamin and mineral value of a range of foods, that will help you decide if a supplement is for you and, if so, how many tablets you require to meet the full formula daily. If you would like to receive a copy of this brochure by post please call MDNZ on **0800 MACULA (622 852)** or email info@mdnz.org.nz. This information is also available on the MDNZ website www.mdnz.org.nz/resources/brochures-and-flyers.

MDNZ Professional Friends

We welcome recent new members to the MDNZ Professional Friend programme.



Optometrists

Nawras Nabhani, Auckland
Keith Miller, Tauranga
Hunter Hill, Alexandra & Cromwell

Ophthalmologists

Michael O'Rourke, Tauranga

Thank you to all Optometrists and Ophthalmologists who have joined the MDNZ Professional Friend Programme. We are delighted to partner with you to save sight for the thousands of New Zealanders with macular degeneration.

Professional Friends receive patient brochures at no cost, a certificate to display in their practice and recognition in MDNZ's newsletter, website and Facebook. Please support the eye professionals who support MDNZ and do tell them you saw them in our newsletter. A full list of Professional Friends is on our website.

If optometrists or ophthalmologists would like to become a Professional Friend of MDNZ, please visit www.mdnz.org.nz, or phone **0800 MACULA (622 852)**.

Videos to watch online

One News Interviews Dr Dianne Sharp,
17 December 2016

www.mdnz.org.nz/onenews

Dr Dianne Sharp – The Treatment Revolution,
9 November 2016

www.mdnz.org.nz/dr-dianne-sharp

Ross Legh – A patient story, 9 November 2016

www.mdnz.org.nz/rossleggh

Awareness and Education seminar
Dr Andrew Thompson, 12 August 2017

www.mdnz.org.nz/awareness-and-education-seminar

What is Macular Degeneration?

www.mdnz.org.nz/what-is-macular-degeneration

Christmas closure of MDNZ office

The MDNZ office will close on 20 December and re-open on 8 January. If you have any concerns about your eyes over the holiday period please contact your GP or hospital emergency services. For general enquiries leave a message on our save sight helpline **0800 MACULA (622 852)** or email us on info@mdnz.org.nz and we will get back to you on our return to the office. View our website www.mdnz.org.nz

Contact your MP to make a difference



Viewpoint Issue #8 in August 2017 requested readers to contact their MP prior to the recent elections. MDNZ sent out three freepost postcards for readers to use.

Now there is a new government in place we encourage you to resend the postcards with your personal message. MDNZ has more postcards available if you need them.

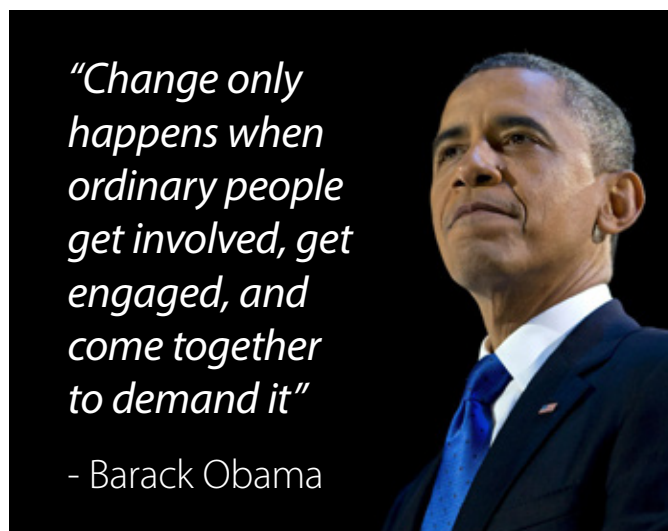
To read up about what points to make and how to send the postcards look up Issue #8 www.mdnz.org.nz/resources/newsletters on pages 1 and 2 for more information.

We recommend you send your personal message to any of the following:

- Your local MP, and ask to meet to discuss
- Prime Minister, Right Hon Jacinda Adern
- Deputy Prime Minister and NZ First Leader, Hon Winston Peters (who campaigned to have one free eye check each year for Supergold cardholders)
- Green Party Leader, Hon James Shaw
- Minister of Health, Hon David Clark
- Associate Ministers of Health – Hon Jenny Salesa and Hon Julie Anne Genter

- Minister for Seniors, Hon Tracey Martin who has the responsibility for implementing the one free eye check policy
- Any member of the Health Select Committee

If you would like more postcards please call us on **0800 622 852** or email info@mdnz.org.nz.



Model of Care for Macular Degeneration in New Zealand

After a number of years of tireless advocacy to ensure macular degeneration is a government health priority, Dr Dianne Sharp (on behalf of MDNZ) was a key contributor to the final EY report that is now in the hands of the Ministry of Health.

In early 2018 MDNZ will continue to follow up with the Ministry of Health, members of parliament and government officials to see macular degeneration stays high on the agenda of health priorities. This work will continue.



Help MDNZ to engage an educator to visit every city in New Zealand and the many towns in between.

Vision for 2020 is a 3 year campaign to raise \$150,000 each year for educators to raise awareness of macular degeneration in communities across New Zealand.

The cost of macular degeneration for individuals and for our society is too high to ignore and we urgently need to spread the word to save sight.

Your gift today will allow MDNZ to reach the 600,000 people across New Zealand that are at risk of macular degeneration and totally unaware of the disease.

If you wish to consider an annual donation, this will help MDNZ to put concrete plans in place for the next three years.

We simply can't do this without you.
Thank you for being a Visionary!

Bequests

Have you thought about leaving a gift to support the future work of MDNZ and its aim to reduce the incidence and impact of MD in New Zealand?

Contact us to find out more on info@mdnz.org.nz or call **0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)**.



Please donate to support those with MD

Title Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Other

First name

Last name

Name to appear on tax receipt

Street address

Suburb

City Postcode

Email

Phone (home)

Phone (mobile)

I would like to give a gift (choose one)

☐ Single ☐ Monthly ☐ Annually

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

I would like to pay by (choose one)

☐ Cheque (enclosed)

☐ Credit card VISA / MasterCard (circle one)

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.

2017 seminars in action



Hamilton



Christchurch



Timaru



Palmerston North

New Product Release explorē 8



explorē 8 The big picture in a small package

The explorē 8 handheld electronic magnifier incorporates a high definition 8 inch screen with twin cameras for unsurpassed closeup and distance viewing clarity.

Perfect when you're at a restaurant, the library, shopping, at school, travelling or at work. Large physical buttons and smart touchscreen technology make the explorē 8 intuitive and easy to use.



For further information contact

Vision Associates

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sales@vahumanware.co.nz

www.humanware.com

Humanware™
see things. differently.