Eye drops slow deterioration of vision

A recent British study found that people with glaucoma who used prostaglandin analogue eye drops reduced their risk of vision loss by more than 50% over two years, compared to an inactive placebo. The findings offer solid proof and reassurance to patients that the visual deterioration caused by glaucoma can be reduced using this treatment.

Medication to lower eye pressure has been used for decades as the main treatment for open-angle glaucoma to delay progressive vision loss.

“But, until now,” researcher, David Garway-Heath, said, “the extent to which the most frequently prescribed class of pressure-lowering drugs have a protective effect on vision was not known.”

– The Lancet, December 2014

Looking for a Unique & Memorable Gift to Mark a Milestone in Life?

Whether it’s for a birthday, graduation, wedding, anniversary, bar/bat mitzvah or the passing of a loved one, a donation to the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a meaningful and lasting way to express your sentiments.

Your gift funds researchers working to find more effective treatments and a cure for glaucoma. It’s easy to donate over the phone, through our secure website, or by mail. We will send you a letter acknowledging your gift and a tax deductible receipt.

Calling All Members!

We need you, your families and friends to walk or run in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Sunday, October 18, 2015 and help raise money for glaucoma research

Last year your Society’s participation in the Marathon raised $66,000 for research! This year with your help, we can do even better.

Introducing our new president!

Vice-President, James M. Parks was elected President of the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada at the January 2015 Board meeting. He replaces Martin Chasson, president for the past six years. Above James with Dr. Trope at the 2014 AGM

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, October 6, 2015 — 5:30 pm
CNIB Conference Centre, 1929 Bayview Ave. Toronto
Free aboveground parking
President’s Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank past President Martin Chasson for his many years of dedicated service and his valuable contribution to the GRSC. And I’m pleased to let you know that Martin will continue to serve on the Board.

The Society had another successful year financially thanks to your generous donations, a bequest of $150,000, grants of $18,500, securities of $10,000 and $66,000 raised in the Scotiabank Marathon. This will allow us to provide at least $200,000 in research grants in 2015.

The Board and I would especially like to thank the volunteers, generous supporters, members and others who made our second year participation in the Marathon such a success. Special thanks to Executive Secretary Dr. Mark Shaffer for his work on this event.

As I reported at the Annual General Meeting last October, the GRSC was continued under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. Minor changes were made in the Society’s by-laws. I will be providing a more expansive report on the continuance at the AGM - October 6, 2015.

I wanted to let you know that the directors have amended the GRSC’s governance model moving it to a more streamlined structure that is similar to what many charities have done.

Under the new by-laws and for legal purposes, the directors will be the only “members” of the Society. Current members and others who wish to support the GRSC will be designated as “supporters”. Supporters will, of course, continue to receive the biannual newsletters and will be invited to an annual meeting, similar to the current AGM, where they will be able to learn about the Society’s plans and accomplishments, hear a presentation from a guest speaker, and participate in a question and answer session. Financial information will continue to be available to supporters.

Subject to approval by the current members at the 2015 Annual General Meeting, this change will take effect immediately afterwards. More information about this change will be sent to members before the AGM.

— James M. Parks, President

Use of generic eye drops improves compliance

More than half of Americans with glaucoma do not take their medications as prescribed. This is one of the biggest obstacles in efforts to prevent glaucoma-related blindness.

A new American study finds that glaucoma patients are more likely to take medications to treat their eye disease if they’re prescribed generic drugs. High drug cost may be a factor in deterring patients on a tight budget from consistently buying and taking medications as prescribed. The study showed that switching patients to more affordable, generic drugs could be an effective solution for patients who have difficulty with adherence.

– Ophthalmology, February 2015

Molecular basis of glaucoma identified

A study in mice has led researchers in Chicago to understand how raised pressure damages the neurons in the optic nerve causing glaucoma. Based on their findings, they are working to develop eye drops that trigger regrowth of the blocked drainage system in mice.

– The Journal of Clinical Investigation, September 2014
I have normal tension glaucoma and the optic nerve in one eye is damaged. Three months of treatment with Travatan drops has not reduced the eye pressure. I have asthma, so I don’t want to have surgery. Should I continue to use Travatan or switch to other drops?

If you were consistent with your use of Travatan and it hasn’t lowered your pressure in three months then it likely won’t work. I would suggest trying one of the other drops in the same class of prostaglandins such as Lumigan or Xalatan. You might also like to consider Trusopt or Alphagan which won’t affect your asthma. You may want to try laser trabeculoplasty before going on to surgery.

I have glaucoma and since my optic nerve’s condition is worsening, I’ve been prescribed one eyedrop of Ganfort* per day to be administered at night. I’ve read articles online about my type of glaucoma and the majority recommend taking Ganfort in the morning. When is the best time for me to use the drug?

Initial studies compared morning vs evening dosing and found that the prostaglandins (PG) - Xalatan, Travatan and Lumigan - all work better when dosed at night. Ganfort, DuoTrav and Xalacom are combination medications. In addition to PG, they contain Timolol, a beta blocker. Recent studies, as well as clinical experience, have shown that dosing these combo meds in the morning may give a stronger beta blocker effect and thus better eye pressure lowering. So I suggest using Ganfort in the morning. * please note Ganfort is not available in North America, only in Europe

Is Diurnal Tension Curve useful in treating primary open angle glaucoma and where can I be tested?

Diurnal tension curves are very helpful in managing patients with glaucoma. They give a true indication of eye pressure fluctuation over the course of the day.

The difficulty is measuring eye pressure in the evening as most eye clinics are not open then. I suggest getting pressure checks at 8 am, 12 noon and 4 pm and make an appointment for an 8 pm pressure check with an optometrist who is open in the evening. Governments don’t reimburse for this test, so you will have to pay.

Is Dorzolamide and Timolol taken separately but concurrently more effective in reducing eye pressure than taking the combined version of Cosopt?

There are fewer side effects and better compliance when taking the combo med, Cosopt, rather than the two separately.

How many visual field tests should a person with advanced glaucoma have in a year?

It is recommended that patients with moderate glaucoma or worse have at least two visual fields per year. As the tests are difficult to perform and time-consuming with little extra benefit, there is no need to have them more frequently.

My wife has lost one eye to glaucoma and surgery on the other eye has left her with 10% vision. Would acupuncture help to improve the optic nerve and regulate the pressure?

Acupuncture has no benefit on eye pressure, although it may help alleviate stress and anxiety.
The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a national registered charity funding research into finding a cure for glaucoma. Since 1989, the GRSC has raised over three million dollars for research. Charitable Registration No 889178695 RR0001

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A powerful way for you to fund research

You can give an existing life insurance policy or purchase a new one naming the GRSC as owner/beneficiary. Gifts of an existing policy entitle the donor to a fair market value tax receipt which may be greater than the cash surrender value.

Giving marketable securities eliminates tax on a capital gain and entitles the donor to a fair market value receipt. This is more tax-efficient than giving cash after selling the securities.

Donors should seek tax advice in connection with gifts of insurance policies or securities.

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