

Glaucoma Research Society of Canada *News & Information*



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We Support New Ideas

New CNIB survey finds almost half of Canadians not well-informed about family history of glaucoma

Despite the fact that glaucoma tends to run in families, a new CNIB survey found that 47% of Canadians do not feel well-informed about their family history of the disease. In fact, only one-third of Canadians have spoken to their immediate families to learn whether glaucoma could be a hereditary concern.

But astonishingly, among the group that reported they did have that conversation, almost half learned that glaucoma was in the family, indicating they could be at an elevated risk.

"People forget that learning about your family history of glaucoma is an important step to protecting your eyesight. Family history, particularly having a parent or sibling with the disease, is considered one of the primary risk factors of glaucoma," said Dr. Keith Gordon, Vice-President of Research and Service Quality, CNIB.

The survey also revealed that most Canadians are unaware that you could have glaucoma, but still be able to see perfectly well.



Don't be left in the dark

There are no symptoms. It develops slowly over time. More than 400,000 Canadians have it today.

Don't lose sight of someone you love. Support glaucoma research today!

Find out more, call toll free:
1.877.483.0204 or visit www.glaucomaresearch.ca



GLAUCOMA RESEARCH
SOCIETY of CANADA

The Globe and Mail is supporting the Glaucoma Research Society of Canada, thanks to our Executive Director Lindsay O'Connor. Free ads in the national newspaper began in March to celebrate **World Glaucoma Week** and will run until the end of the year.

President's Message



I want to share some exciting news. Your Board has engaged Lindsay O'Connor as part-time Executive Director. This is a new position and will allow GRSC to have a capable professional

dedicated to advancing the Society's objectives.

To encourage and obtain sustainable gifting to the Society, Lindsay will establish relationships with

- pharmaceutical companies
- foundations such as The Ontario Trillium Foundation
- corporations with charitable funds, and
- the news media.

With 13 years of national and international experience in the eye health field, "Lins" is an excellent fit for GRSC's fundraising needs. Please call or e-mail Lins if you'd like to help by becoming a volunteer.

I am pleased to report that Lins arranged for the *Globe & Mail* to design and run a large, full colour banner ad for the Society in several editions. The *Globe* has nearly three million readers coast-to-coast.

More Good News

We are now a member of *Vision 2020 Canada*, a joint program of The World Health Organization and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

I also want to note that our *Tealess Tea* campaign raised over \$74,000 thanks to the tireless and dedicated efforts by our vice-president Renée Wolfe. Many thanks to her for a job well done.

Please Check our Website

www.glaucomaresearch.ca to view a glaucoma simulator that illustrates how glaucoma progresses. And in recognition of World Glaucoma Week, March 6-12,

we've posted Pfizer's "all eyes on glaucoma" videos:

- Overview of Glaucoma
- Impact on Daily Living
- World Glaucoma Week
- What's Your Inspiration.

Remember GRSC in Your Will

The financial news media predict that this generation will see the largest ever transfer of wealth from the *boomers'* inheritances. Please continue your support for glaucoma research through your will. These gifts can help reduce both your income taxes and the incidence of glaucoma.

Several donors have expressed an interest in funding a specific research grant in their names. Please contact our office for details.

As always, we thank our members for their generous contributions. Without your support, we could not provide the funding needed to find a cure for glaucoma.

— *Martin Chasson, President*

Study indicates eye drops critical for glaucoma patients

When someone has glaucoma, pressure builds in their eyes. Patients are prescribed eye drops that drain fluid, decreasing the pressure.

A 12-year study of 216 Canadian glaucoma patients with an average age of 65, being monitored every 4 months, found using eye drops to lower the pressure in the eye, slowed the progression of the disease.

"We've known for a long time how beneficial reducing eye pressure is for practically every patient. What we didn't know was what difference eye drops make in the rate the disease progresses," said Dr. Balwantray Chauhan, the study's lead investigator and chair of vision research at Dalhousie University. "The findings show even a small difference in reducing eye pressure has a positive impact on slowing the progress of the disease."

— *Archives of Ophthalmology*



Dr. Rajiv Bindlish Answers Your Questions about Glaucoma

Does Xalatan cause high blood pressure?

No clinical evidence indicates that Xalatan raises systemic blood pressure. It has been shown to have no effect on blood pressure control and is overall safe to use.

I was diagnosed with glaucoma and had trabeculectomy surgery two weeks ago. I have been told that I might need another surgery, is this common?

It is uncommon to need a second surgery so quickly after a trabeculectomy which lowers eye pressure by making a window on the eye to bypass the eye's internal drain. After surgery this window may be "too open" or "too closed" resulting in very low or very high eye pressure. If this persists, another surgery may be required to correct this.

Do you know why an eye will not freeze?

It is uncommon for freezing (topical anaesthesia) not to fully take. However, in some patients topical anaesthetics don't work that well. This may be because the eye is hypersensitized from medications or previous surgeries. Also eyes that tear excessively may wash out the anaesthetic drops.

An injection around the eye is sometimes necessary to control any discomfort, and for surgery, a general anaesthetic may be better.

Is anyone doing stem cell research on repairing eyes damaged by glaucoma?

Stem cell research is currently an active area of interest for ophthalmology and for glaucoma treatment. Promising and ongoing research involves trying to regain function of the trabecular meshwork (internal drain of the eye) as well as regrowth/repair of retinal ganglion cells damaged due to glaucoma.

Should I have LASIK surgery if there is glaucoma in my extended family or will this make treatment of glaucoma more difficult if needed in the future?

Glaucoma runs in families with highest risk when parents or siblings have it. If it's in the extended family, the overall risk of getting glaucoma is low. It can skip generations.

LASIK thins the cornea. Your doctor may underestimate eye pressure in a thinner cornea and miss a glaucoma diagnosis. To get a specific correction factor for eye pressure for the future, get a series of eye pressures measured over the course of the day before and after LASIK.

The prescribed drops for my glaucoma are causing problems with my eyelids. Can you tell me about implants that vent excess pressure in the eyeball?

Many new surgical devices are used to treat glaucoma. An iStent may reduce the need for glaucoma drops. An iStent is indicated for early glaucoma, and seems to have better results if combined with cataract surgery. The cost, about \$800-\$1000 for one, \$1200-\$1400 for two, may not be covered by provincial medical or private insurance.

Questions about Glaucoma?

Email your questions to
info@glaucomaresearch.ca
or call

416-483-0200 1-877-483-0204

Dr. Bindlish will answer selected questions in upcoming newsletters.

Eye Donations Needed

Information gathered from eyes with glaucoma can help researchers find a cure. But eye donations are rare, and donations of eyes with glaucoma, rarer still. For more information, visit the Eye Bank of Canada's website at www.eyebank.med.utoronto.ca/

**Mark Your Calendars
Annual General Meeting
Wed., October 19, 2011**

**Glaucoma – A Patient's
Guide to the Disease**

Dr. Graham Trope answers more than 150 questions about glaucoma, tests and treatments in the 3rd edition of his book.

You can get a copy from the Society for \$15. All proceeds from book sales support research grants.

Send your name, address and daytime phone number with a cheque, or VISA or MASTERCARD number and expiry date, to the address below.

Gifts of Life Insurance

A powerful way for you to fund research. Small annual premium payments treated as a charitable tax deduction can create significant gifts in the future.

You can make a gift of an existing policy or purchase a new one naming the Society as owner/beneficiary. Gifts of an existing policy entitle the donor to a fair market value tax receipt, which can be greater than the cash surrender value.

For Information about GRSC

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The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada is a national registered charity funding research into finding a cure for glaucoma. Since 1988, GRSC has raised over one and a half million dollars for research. Charitable Registration No 889178695 RR0001

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