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The Best Vision Newsletter

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New Insight Into the Role of Intraocular Pressure in the Development of Glaucoma

The Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study (OHTS) has provided important support for the role of lowering intraocular pressure (IOP) to prevent the development of primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG). The OHTS was a prospective, randomized, multicenter trial to determine whether reducing IOP delays or prevents POAG and subsequent visual loss in those at risk. The OHTS involved the 1,636 40-80 year-old patients who had elevated IOP but no signs of glaucoma. Inclusion criteria included IOP of 24-32 in one eye and 21-32 in the other eye. Half of these patients received treatment to lower IOP by 20% with any commercially available FDA-approved drop, and the other half were observed without treatment.

The OHTS demonstrated that the development of POAG was reduced more than 50% in the group that received IOP-lowering drops for 5 years: POAG developed 4.4% in the treatment group and 9.5% in the observation group. Older age, male, African descent, higher IOP, larger C/D ratios, heart disease, and reduced corneal thickness were identified as risk factors in the development of POAG.

The OHTS provides clear evidence of the benefit of lowering IOP to preserve vision. The OHTS suggests that IOP drops should not be prescribed for all patients with ocular hypertension (OHTN) as 90% of participants in the observation group did not develop glaucoma within the study's 5-year period. The OHTS demonstrates that each individual's risk factors, along with health status and life expectancy, should be considered in deciding whether to treat OHTN. This decision becomes a balance of the ability to prevent optic nerve damage against the likelihood of developing a functional loss of vision during a patient's lifetime.

Dr. Searcy is excited to present "The Importance of Intraocular Pressure" at our fall conference at the New Albany Country Club. The Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study will be discussed in detail, in addition to the other landmark glaucoma studies. This review will include the clinical implications of IOP management from the lessons learned from these studies.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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We dedicate ourselves to enhancing the quality of life for every individual whose life we touch, by helping each to see his or her best, and by preserving our patients' vision and eye health throughout life.

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