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Skin and Eye Health

## Naturopathic Therapy Concepts for Eye Diseases

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The eyes are subject to numerous internal and external influences – from metabolic processes to UV radiation and even psychological stress. Diseases such as macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and COVID-associated vision disorders are continuously increasing with rising life expectancy and new health challenges.

### Macular Degeneration (AMD)

AMD is a chronic disease of both eyes that is based on a metabolic disorder and affects the site of sharpest vision, the macula. However, visual impairment usually only occurs with advanced AMD. A distinction is made between two forms:

- Dry AMD: It progresses rather slowly and cannot yet be treated effectively.
- Wet AMD: It leads to visual impairment more quickly than dry AMD, but can be treated effectively.

### Causes

Various reasons for AMD are discussed here, as the eye is subject to a wide variety of external and internal influences, such as sunlight, metabolism, genetics, nutrition, individual stresses, but also

psychological influences, which can be considered alone or together. Nevertheless, one cause stands out very strongly, and that is the reduction in function of the so-called pigment epithelium. The pigment epithelium is a thin layer within the retina whose task is to dispose of metabolic end products of the retina. If this task is no longer performed sufficiently well, small deposits, so-called drusen, are formed. They hinder the supply of the retina. In dry AMD, this leads to the fact that the light-sensitive cells of the retina are slowly destroyed.

In wet AMD, new blood vessels grow below the retina in response to the deposits, grow into it and can lift it in the process. The newly formed vessels can become permeable, so that blood and fluid seep into the retina and damage cells.

#### **Other Factors:**

- Genetic disposition: Genes have been identified that are thought to be causally involved in the development of macular degeneration, the so-called macular gene 1, also known as CFH-Y402H.
- Older age: The UN estimates that between 20 and 25 million people worldwide suffer from AMD. Based on today's life expectancy, it can be assumed that this number will triple within the next 30 to 40 years, and about 20 to 30 percent of those over 70 are affected by AMD.
- Pre-existing conditions such as arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure and diabetes are risk factors, as they can also affect the small vessels in the eye. The result is a lack of nutrients and oxygen. Since the functions of the retina depend very much on oxygen and nutrients, as a cause a reduced supply often quickly leads to defects.
- Previous surgeries, injuries and other traumas can affect the eyes both immediately and insidiously and thus be causes of AMD. For example, a publication by the German Institute for Medical Documentation and Information (DIMDI) shows, for example, that a connection between cataract surgery and the subsequent occurrence of AMD is causally discussed.
- Oxidative stress is also considered a cause of eye diseases as well as a possible cause of AMD. Possible causes of oxidative stress are: UV radiation, physical and psychological stress, an unbalanced diet, high-fat food, alcohol, environmental toxins, undetected diseases, "flash diets" and especially smoking.
- Too little fluid intake can also be the cause.

#### **Symptoms**

This leads to disorders of central vision, whereby the objects on which one specifically directs one's gaze appear blurred or distorted. With advanced AMD, they are no longer visible at all. Objects at the edge of the field of view usually remain visible with AMD, but are not well recognized.

#### **Conservative Therapy**

In the treatment of wet AMD, the drugs are injected into the eye and inhibit the formation of new blood vessels. They are called VEGF inhibitors (= Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor). The

growth factor VEGF is overactive in patients with retinal diseases and thus leads to pathological vascular growth and unwanted fluid accumulation in the eye. The active ingredients used bind VEGF so that it can no longer bind to its specific receptor. Due to this blockage, the vessels do not continue to grow and existing edema dries out. *"The wet AMD is converted into a dry AMD, so to speak."* However, laser therapy (photodynamic therapies) and operations are also used. Dry macular degeneration cannot yet be treated effectively.

#### **Active Substances Utilized:**

- Aflibercept (Eylea)
- Ranibizumab (Lucentis)
- Bevacizumab (Avastin)

#### **Side effects**

VEGF inhibitors, which are used to treat wet macular degeneration, sometimes have serious side effects, including tachycardia, infections and even blindness.

### **Holistic Naturopathic Therapy Concept**

#### **Direct therapy of AMD**

Research from the 5-year ARED studies 1 and 2 has shown that supplementation with antioxidant vitamins, zinc and copper can reduce the risk of progressive AMD <sup>(1, 2)</sup>. Beta-carotene, which is suspected of promoting lung cancer in smokers, has been successfully replaced by lutein/zeaxanthin! For example, Vitazell Video Caps. Köhler, 1x daily. 1 caps. contains Astaxanthin, lutein, zeaxanthin, bilberry extract, vitamins A, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>, folic acid, B<sub>12</sub>, C, D<sub>3</sub>, E, K<sub>2</sub>, selenium, copper and zinc <sup>(3)</sup>.

Omega-3-FS is part of the retina in the eye and is therefore of great importance for it. It is also involved in the formation of tear fluid and thus protects the eye from drying out, e.g. Vitazell Omega Caps. Köhler, daily 2 caps.

Additional holistic options:

- Blood circulation: through L-arginine, e.g. Nodys Caps Köhler, 2x daily 2 caps.
- Liver (mother of eyes): with milk thistle, e.g. Legalon 156 Caps., 1x daily. 1 cap and/or with artichoke, dandelion, turmeric and choline, e.g. Pangea Caps. Köhler, 2x daily 1 Caps.
- Consideration of the psyche, insight, outlook, perspective or "I can't see someone anymore", e.g. Calmvalera Drops., 4x daily. 40 drops.
- Detoxification and drainage (e.g. with Meckel-Spenglersan, metafackler, Hevert, Pekana or Phoenix, etc.) because of the drusen plus parallel consideration of the acid-base balance, e.g. via the Regulator Köhler Caps, in the evening 2 caps..

The respective therapies should be carried out for at least 6 to 8 weeks due to the frequent chronicity.

### **Cataract (Cataracts, Lens Opacity)**

As a result of cataracts, the lens of the eye and thus also the vision become increasingly cloudy and those affected see as if through a veil. By the way, the Greeks believed that this veil was caused by a liquid that runs down inside the eye and coined the name cataract, which means waterfall. Beyond the age of 65, almost everyone is affected by it. In the course of our lives, the lens changes continuously, new cells form in the nucleus and cause the lens to become thicker and more inflexible over the years. If the lens loses its elasticity, its refractive power also changes and objects in the vicinity appear increasingly blurred as a result. The lens contains highly concentrated proteins that remain transparent due to the protective proteins A-crystallin (cryAA) and B-crystallin (cryAB). Gradually, however, the crystallines fail, causing the proteins to clump together and lead to lens opacity. The incident light is scattered through them – blurred vision is the result!

#### **Symptoms**

- Vision becomes increasingly blurred
- Colors appear paler
- Sensitivity to glare increases
- The eyes get used to changing light conditions more slowly
- Spatial perception and distance vision deteriorate

#### **Holistic Naturopathic Therapy Concept for Cataracts**

- Blood circulation: e.g. Nodys Caps Köhler, 2x daily 2 caps.
- Antioxidants: e.g. Resol Caps Köhler, 1x daily. 1 cap. or Uniselen 200 µg Köhler, 1x daily 1 tbl. + No. 26 selenium, e.g. Pflüger, 3x 1 tbl.
- Eye and liver (mother of eyes): e.g. Pangea caps Köhler, 2x daily 1 cap.
- Other options: e.g. Pflügerplex® Senecio 134, 3x daily 30 drops.
- and/or LENS Viscum comp. globuli velati Wala 1-2x daily 5-10 glb.
- and LENS Viscum comp. Eye Drops

The respective therapies should be carried out for at least 6 to 8 weeks due to the frequent chronicity.

### **Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is a collective term for diseases of the eye that are associated with structural damage to the optic nerve (optic neuropathy) and associated visual field defects and changes in the optic nerve papilla. Glaucoma is often caused by too high intraocular pressure, due to the fact that the aqueous humor cannot drain properly. It accumulates and thus increases the intraocular pressure. This puts a strain on the optic nerve and there is then a risk of nerve cells dying.

### **Causes**

- Poor blood flow to the optic nerve
- In this case, the nerve cells are not sufficiently supplied with oxygen and nutrients
- Glaucoma can also be a result of inflammation, injury and vascular disease
- Arteriosclerosis
- Arterial hypotension
- Genetic disposition
- Diabetes mellitus

### **Conservative Therapy**

- Beta-blockers: timolol, levobunolol
- Parasympathomimetics (Miotics): Carbachol, Pilocarpine
- Alpha-sympathomimetics: clonidine, brimonidine
- Carbonic anhydrase inhibitors: locally as eye drops as brinzolamide and dorzolamide or systemic acetazolamide
- Prostaglandins: Latanoprost, Travoprost, Bimatoprost

### **Mode of Action**

- Reduction of the production of aqueous humor from the ciliary body: beta-blockers, alpha-sympathomimetics, carbonic anhydrase inhibitors
- The prostaglandins increase the permeability of the ciliary body, and the so-called non-conventional outflow or uveoscleral outflow is increased
- Parasympathomimetics work by contracting the ciliary body, which opens the trabecular meshwork. The additional pupil-constricting effect with the opening of the chamber angle is advantageous in narrow-angle glaucoma

### **Holistic Naturopathic Therapy Concept for Glaucoma**

- Blood circulation: e.g. Nodys Caps Köhler, 2x daily 2 caps. or e.g. Vitazell Omega Köhler Caps, daily 2 caps.
- More options: Mucokohl D5 AT EDO, 2x daily 1 drop into the affected eye &
- e.g. Gletar spag. Peka Drops Pekana, 3x daily 30 drops & No. 8 Sodium chloratum D6, e.g. Pflüger, 3x 2 Tbl. or Jaborandi D12 DHU Globuli, 3x daily. 10 Glb.
- Lymphatic flow?
- Psyche?

The respective therapies should be carried out for at least 6 to 8 weeks due to the frequent chronicity.

### **Visual disturbances in POST/LONG-COVID**

Ophthalmologic symptoms are usually observed about two weeks after the onset of infection, but the eye can also be the primary organ in a fresh infection. For example, various forms of conjunctivitis are reported as a concomitant disease in 1-32% of all COVID-19 patients. In addition to conjunctivitis, which is the most commonly described ocular comorbidity of COVID-19 infection, there are already many reports of other eye damage in the context of this pandemic viral disease. Inflammation of the eyelids, dermis, choroid (= blepharitis, episcleritis and uveitis), the retinal vessels and the optic nerve, as well as paralysis of cranial nerves 3, 4 and 6 have been described. Retinopathies and glaucoma can also occur as a result of the formation of agonistically active autoantibodies at G-protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs), e.g. AT1 and Beta-2. Increasingly, the condition of the retina is seen as representative of the entire systemic microcirculation. The problem is often more pronounced in women. Venous thrombosis as well as vascular occlusion of the central artery of the retina with resulting blindness occur more rarely.

### **Holistic Naturopathic Therapy Concept for GPCR**

- Immunomodulation: with the help of beta-D-glucans to restore the Th1 and Th2 balance: e.g. Unizink Immun plus Caps, 1x daily 1 cap.
- Improved blood circulation in the eye: e.g. Vitazell Video Caps. Köhler, 1x daily 1 cap. (see above)
- Anti-inflammation and blood circulation: with the help of Omega-3-FS, e.g. Vitazell Omega Köhler Caps, daily. 2 caps.

The respective therapies should be carried out for at least 6 to 8 weeks due to the frequent chronicity.

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Homeopathy and Naturopathy

Naturopathic Practice Ibbenbüren

### Literature

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- Further reading from the author



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