

Scientists develop implantable telescope

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U.S. scientists are exploring the use of an implantable miniature telescope for use in end-stage age-related macular degeneration.

The researchers, led by Dr. Kathryn Colby at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, said although the device hasn't been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, they've developed a surgical technique to ensure proper placement in the eye.

Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of visual impairment and blindness among people 60 and older.

"At the very end stages of this disease, vision is very poor and quality of life is compromised," said Colby. "An implantable miniature telescope can improve the vision and quality of life for patients but surgeons must be very careful in implanting it."

The scientists said it's critical surgeons not view the first-of-its-kind device as simply an intraocular lens, such as used in cataract surgeries.

The recommended technique for the surgical procedure -- prepared by Colby and Drs. David Chang of the University of California-San Francisco, Doyle Stulting of Emory University and Stephen Lanes of Associated Eye Care in Stillwater, Minn. -- is detailed in the August issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology.

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