

Mixed results for stem cell treatments of AMD

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(HealthDay)—Stem cells may offer new hope for patients with age-

related macular degeneration, but that promise can come with some risks, according to research published in the March 17 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

One report details a legitimate effort to restore the sight of a 77-year-old Japanese woman with macular degeneration using stem cells. The team grafted a new sheet of [retinal tissue](#) derived from [stem cells](#) into the right eye of the female patient. One year after the operation, the patient's vision stabilized and her eye appears to have accepted the graft with no serious side effects, the authors reported.

A second article in the same journal issue reports on three older women who underwent unproven stem cell treatments on their eyes in 2015, senior author Jeffrey Goldberg, M.D., Ph.D., chair of ophthalmology for the Byers Eye Institute at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., told *HealthDay*. The women all thought the [stem cell therapy](#) was part of a clinical trial, but there's no evidence that a genuine clinical trial was taking place, Goldberg noted.

"The patients' severe visual loss after the injection was associated with ocular hypertension, hemorrhagic retinopathy, vitreous hemorrhage, combined traction and rhegmatogenous retinal detachment, or lens dislocation," write the authors of the second report. "After one year, the patients' visual acuity ranged from 20/200 to no light perception."

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