

*To the Editor*—Your recent review article on treatment options for neovascular age-related macular degeneration by Lu and Kwok was concise and well-written.<sup>1</sup> This article cited an interesting study which noted that supplementation with vitamins C, E, beta-carotene, zinc and copper was associated with significant slowing of the progression of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).<sup>2</sup> Another study reported that year-long supplementation with acetyl-n-carnitine, omega-3-fatty acids and coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub> significantly improved vision and significantly reduced drusen-covered areas in 49 patients with early AMD, while no overall improvement was seen in 53 patients given a placebo.<sup>3</sup>

Nutrition may play an important role in managing macular degeneration and other retinal diseases. Relatively little research has been done to examine the possible effects of nutrition on other retinal disorders such as retinitis pigmentosa and

the cone rod dystrophies.<sup>4,5</sup> Retinitis pigmentosa and cone rod dystrophies affect about one in 3600 people and relatively little effective treatment is currently available for these retinal diseases.<sup>4,5</sup>

Nutritional interventions are inexpensive and offer a relatively low risk of adverse side-effects. I strongly urge that more studies examining the possible effects of nutrition on macular degeneration, cone rod dystrophies and rod cone dystrophies be undertaken and published.

**Luke Curtis, MD, MS**  
E-mail: luketcurtis@aol.com  
Internal Medicine  
Norwegian American Hospital  
1328 Greenwood  
Wilmette, Illinois 60091  
United States

### References

1. Lu LP, Kwok AK. An update of treatment options for neovascular age-related macular degeneration. *Hong Kong Med J* 2007;13:460-70.
2. Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group. A randomized, placebo-controlled, clinical trial of high-dose supplementation with vitamins C and E, beta carotene and zinc for age-related macular degeneration and vision loss: AREDS report no.8. *Arch Ophthalmol* 2001;119:1417-36.
3. Feher J, Kovacs B, Kovacs I, Schveoller M, Papale A, Balacco Gabrieli C. Improvement of visual functions and fundus alterations in early age-related macular degeneration treatment with a combination of acetyl-L-carnitine, n-3 fatty acids, and coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub>. *Ophthalmologica* 2005;219:154-66.
4. Hamel C. Retinitis pigmentosa. *Orphanet J Rare Dis* 2006;1:40-51.
5. Hamel C. Cone rod dystrophies. *Orphanet J Rare Dis* 2007;2:7-13.