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Hindawi Publishing Corporation
Journal of Ophthalmology
Volume 2013, Article ID 899147, 11 pages
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/899147>



Review Article

Smoking and Age-Related Macular Degeneration: Review and Update

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Received 15 July 2013; Revised 14 September 2013; Accepted 3 October 2013

Academic Editor: Gabriele Thumann

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Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is one of the main socioeconomic health issues worldwide. AMD has a multifactorial etiology with a variety of risk factors. Smoking is the most important modifiable risk factor for AMD development and progression. The present review summarizes the epidemiological studies evaluating the association between smoking and AMD, the mechanisms through which smoking induces damage to the choroidal tissues, and the relevance of advising patients to quit smoking for their visual health.

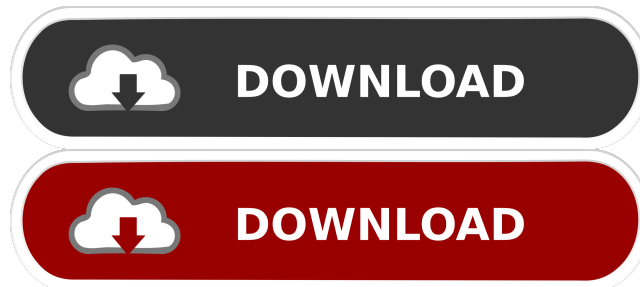
1. Introduction

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a macular neurodegenerative disease that nowadays constitutes one of the main socioeconomic health issues worldwide, afflicting the elderly population. The exponentially increasing prevalence of AMD is linked to progressive aging of the population, and it is the leading cause of legal blindness in the developed world [1–6]. It is traditionally divided into three categories: early AMD, characterized by the presence of pigmentary

changes of the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) and/or hard small drusen; intermediate AMD, characterized by the presence of soft large drusen and/or geographic atrophy (GA) of the RPE with foveal sparing; and late AMD, characterized by GA with foveal involvement and/or choroidal neovascularization (CNV) [7, 8].

On the other hand, the presence or absence of CNV makes the distinction between neovascular AMD (presence of macular fluid and/or hemorrhage secondary to CNV) and atrophic or nonneovascular AMD (presence of any other

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