

Public relations guide for promoting your practice after you've acquired an AdaptDx

Congratulations on your purchase. You're now leading the fight against AMD.

It's important to set up a basic public relations strategy to promote your business and attract new patients. These 5 easy tips will help you get started. Using this kit will help you create brand awareness and gain exposure without spending a lot of money.

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1. Decide Who Will Handle Public Relations Efforts in Your Practice

The first step in creating your public relations plan is deciding who will take charge of executing your public relations strategy. Having a dedicated person to take on these responsibilities will help keep your efforts organized and focused. If you have aggressive growth goals or live in a very competitive area, you may want to consider outsourcing your public relations to a professional - such as an individual or even an agency.

2. Identify Your Media Targets

Think about where you and your patients turn to for local news (newspapers, local radio, local TV stations), then start to identify the journalists and reporters who cover healthcare issues for each. Make a list and start collecting their contact information, which is often published online or could require a simple call to the station. In larger metro areas, it may be most efficient to contract a local public relations consultant who has access to updated local media lists and relationships with target journalists.

3. Establish Credibility

Now that you have a target media list, send them a short email to introduce yourself and provide some background on your areas of expertise. Even better, make a comment on one of their latest healthcare-focused stories. Let them know how much you appreciate their coverage of an important issue and share an interesting fact or opinion to reinforce the value you could bring to future stories. You can accompany your message with a copy of your personalized press release and AMD backgrounder (refer to Easy-to-Use Tools)

Maybe even suggest a story idea. For instance, you could tell them that age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of adult blindness and you are concerned that their readers may not know enough about the importance of an early diagnose to improve outcomes. Let them know that you offer a new technology that can help you detect AMD several years earlier.

Leverage Your Website and Social Media Presence

- Add information about AMD and the AdaptDx® to your website. You will want your patients and the media to know about the disease and your advanced testing capabilities.
- Post any stories, press releases, or media clips on your practice website and social media accounts.
- Post pictures of the AdaptDx on your Facebook page or other social media sites (like Instagram).

For website & social media content, please download our Online Promotional kit from the academy.maculogix.com resource page.

4. Nurture the Relationship

Healthcare reporters cover a variety of topics, so they may not be paying close attention to advances or trends in eye care. So, when you come across information or research you think could have broad appeal, send them a note with a brief explanation and why you think their viewers/readers should care. You could also invite them to visit your practice for a tour – show off your state-of-the-art technology or recent remodel. This could also be an opportunity to discuss legislation or policies that could impact your ability to care for patients.

5. Be Prepared!

Once journalists identify you as a resource, they may come to you with little notice for a comment or opinion on a story they are developing. Therefore, it's important that you are prepared. Audiences have short attention spans and soundbites go over well. You probably know all the science and biology behind the topic, but it's more valuable when you can translate complicated information into a simple message with a key takeaway. Here are a few tips for being prepared:

- Prepare a few key messages focused on what you want to communicate – Set up the problem and share the solution. Adding a memorable statistic or examples can help bring your point to life. For example, “Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss among older adults, affecting more than 11 million Americans” and “Fortunately, we now have technology that can help us detect AMD several years earlier.”
- Keep it short and sweet. Answer the question as succinctly and simply as possible, then stop when you are finished. For example, “Trouble seeing or driving at night can be an early symptom of macular degeneration.”
- Don't let your guard down. Assume everything you say could be part of the story rather than “off the record.”

With the right approach to public relations, you could position yourself as the local eye care expert, leading to an increase in local publicity that can increase patient loyalty and attract new ones.

Easy-to-Use Tools

Press Release Template

[Practice Letterhead or Logo]

NEWS RELEASE

[Physician or Practice] Offers Innovative Test to Detect Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) in its Earliest Stages

– AdaptDx Testing Can Help Prevent Blindness Caused by AMD –

[City, State – Month, Day, Year] – [Physician or practice], a [short description of the practice], is among the first to offer the AdaptDx® test to help detect and monitor age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The AdaptDx is a simple, non-invasive test that measures the time it takes a patient's vision to adjust from bright light to darkness, a process known as dark adaptation. With the AdaptDx, clinicians at [Clinician or practice] can diagnose AMD before any vision loss occurs – and put a plan place to help preserve vision.

“Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of adult blindness, and more than three times as common as glaucoma. It is a chronic disease that causes a part of your retina called the macula to slowly deteriorate as you get older and makes it difficult to recognize faces, read, watch TV, and drive,” said [Dr. Name]. “Many of our patients over age 50 are having trouble seeing or reading in dim light – and this can be the first symptom of AMD. With the AdaptDx, we are able to quickly and easily measure dark adaptation to detect AMD at a subclinical level, which is critical to delaying significant vision loss.”

[Dr. Name] recommends AdaptDx testing to patients over age 50, particularly those who have trouble seeing or driving at night. Other than age, risk factors for AMD include a family history of the disease, Caucasian race, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or cardiovascular disease.

“We are very excited to be one of the first practices to offer this state-of-the-art technology to help identify AMD in its earliest stages and help our patients take action to preserve their vision,” said [Dr. Name]. “While there is not a cure for AMD yet, there are several lifestyle changes and supplements that have a proven track record of delaying the progression of the disease.”

The AdaptDx test is a simple test that is easy to take. Nothing touches the patient's eye and the test does not require pupil dilation. During the test, the patient looks into the AdaptDx in a darkened room, and presses a button every time they see a flashing light. The amount of time it takes to complete the test provides the doctor with vital information regarding the patient's retinal function.

About [Practice Name]

[Insert boilerplate information about practice]

About AdaptDx®

The AdaptDx is the first and only device for the subclinical detection and management of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of adult blindness. The AdaptDx enables eye care professionals to detect AMD several years before physical changes to the retina are visible and allows them to monitor disease progression. This facilitates proactive treatment at each stage of this chronic disease to eliminate preventable blindness. Backed by more than 20 years of proven clinical research, the AdaptDx is an easy-to-use functional test that accurately measures dark adaptation, a key biomarker of AMD. The AdaptDx is made in the USA by MacuLogix, Inc. Visit www.MacuLogix.com for additional information.

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Contact:

[Practice contact name, phone number, email address]

Background Information on AMD (AMD Backgrounder)

Backgrounders provide helpful information to the media in one simple easy to read document. Instead of spending time researching AMD, reporters can refer to this document saving them time and making your practice an easy to work with and valuable subject.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of vision loss among people age 50 and older.¹ It is a chronic, progressive disease that causes the central part of your vision—the part used for reading, seeing people's faces, and driving—to deteriorate slowly. AMD affects more than 11 million Americans, including 1 in 8 over age 60.² Unfortunately, AMD patients are diagnosed too late and have substantial, irreversible vision loss at the time of their first treatment.³ Which is why diagnosis at a subclinical stage is the key to positive outcomes.

In most people, AMD causes slow, gradual changes in vision over many years. In some cases, AMD progresses more rapidly and causes severe vision loss in just a few months.

Dry and Wet AMD

There are two forms of macular degeneration: dry (non-neovascular or atrophic) AMD and wet (neovascular or exudative) AMD. More common than the wet form, dry AMD affects about 80 to 90 percent of individuals diagnosed with AMD. Dry AMD is a stage of the disease that can last several years. It is associated with a thinning of the macula and fatty deposits under the retina called drusen. In most cases, normal daylight vision is unaffected so individuals are not aware they have AMD. However, even though people usually blame it on other causes, dry AMD impacts their dark adaptation (or “night vision”) in a telltale fashion.

In 10 to 15 percent of individuals, dry AMD progresses to the wet form of the disease in which new blood vessels, growing beneath the retina, leak blood and fluid that cause permanent damage to light-sensitive retinal cells. These cells die off, causing central vision blurriness and blind spots.

The transition from dry to wet AMD can happen rapidly and, if it is left untreated, can lead to legal blindness. Treatment of wet AMD with anti-VEGF injections is well understood and, once initiated, usually helps to stop or slow further vision loss. However, it is limited in its ability to reverse damage already done.

AMD Detection

Identifying AMD at a subclinical stage allows patients to work with their eye doctor to take action before significant vision loss has occurred. Putting a care plan in place at the earliest possible time will preserve as much vision as possible over a longer duration. Our practice is among the first in the country to offer patients a new test, AdaptDx[®], which detects AMD in its earliest stages. This simple, non-invasive test measure the Rod intercept (RI), which is the time in minutes it takes the patient's eye to adapt from bright light to darkness (dark adaptation).

The AdaptDx test lasts less than 15 minutes and can easily fit into a comprehensive eye examination. This test of retinal function complements the structural imaging and photography of the retina for a more robust evaluation of retinal health. Once AMD is detected, it can help monitor progression of the disease.

AMD Risk Factors and Symptoms

The earliest symptom of AMD is poor or deteriorating night vision. As the disease progresses, symptoms may also include distortion of straight lines or dark and blurry central vision. If patients are experiencing symptoms, it is important to have their RI measured with the AdaptDx:

- Age 50 or older
- Family history of AMD
- Caucasian (white)
- Smoker or past smoker
- Being overweight
- Heart disease, high blood pressure or high cholesterol

AMD Treatment

While there is no cure for AMD, progression of the disease may be slowed with ultraviolet light protection, diet and lifestyle changes, in addition to specific high-dose vitamin and mineral supplements. The Age-Related Eye Disease Studies (AREDS and AREDS2), conducted by the National Eye Institute, showed that daily intake of certain high-dose vitamins and minerals can slow progression of the disease.

Current treatments for wet AMD – including drug therapy, photodynamic therapy, or laser surgery – are all aimed at stopping abnormal blood vessel growth. Drug therapy works by inhibiting a protein called vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), which stimulates the growth of new blood vessels. These anti-VEGF injections slow or prevent additional vision loss, and may even improve vision to some extent. Several agents with different mechanisms of action – or that target different disease pathways – are currently under investigation and may expand the options available to treat AMD.

About AdaptDx®

Based on the science of dark adaptation, MacuLogix's AdaptDx provides a clear, objective measurement of retinal function that is 90% sensitive and 90% specific to the presence of AMD. Using a single number, the Rod Intercept™ (RI), AMD can be detected early – at least 3 years before drusen are visible – when a course of action may help delay or prevent blindness caused by AMD. The AdaptDx is made in the USA by MacuLogix, Inc. Visit maculogix.com for additional information.

1. Bright Focus Foundation, "Age-Related macular Degeneration: Facts & Figures" <https://www.brightfocus.org/macular/article/age-related-macular-facts-figures>. Accessed July 31, 2019.
2. Klein R, et al. *Arch Ophthalmology*. 2011; 129(1):75-80
3. Olsen TW, Feng X, Kasper TJ, Rath PP, Steuer, ER. Fluorescein angiographic lesion type frequency in neovascular Age-Related macular degeneration. *Ophthalmology*. 2004; 111(2), 250–255. doi.org/10.1016/j.ophtha.2003.05.030. Accessed May 23, 2018.