



American Society of Retina Specialists Publishes Compounding Pharmacy Information to Promote Safety of Avastin for Treating Macular Degeneration

Responding to recent incidents of blinding endophthalmitis after injections of Avastin, the American Society of Retina Specialists is publishing safety information for physicians on the compounding pharmacies that prepare the drug for injection into the eye.

Chicago, IL ([PRWEB](#)) October 04, 2011 -- [The American Society of Retina Specialists](#) (ASRS) has published online safety information about compounding pharmacies to help retina specialists choose high-quality providers of Avastin, a cancer drug being used to treat macular degeneration.

“Recent cases of blinding endophthalmitis following Avastin injections have resulted from bacterial contamination,” says ASRS President Suber S. Huang, MD, MBA.

Avastin is a cancer drug; its off-label use to treat macular degeneration requires a compounding pharmacy to divide a vial of the drug into many smaller doses. These smaller doses are then transferred to a syringe for injection into the eye.

“The risk of blindness comes from bacterial contamination during the extra handling of Avastin while being prepared for treating macular degeneration,” Dr. Huang explains.

The FDA recently reported that 12 cases of blindness in Miami were traced to a single compounding pharmacy, which it did not identify.

The ASRS surveyed its member physicians to find whether their practices had experienced any cases of endophthalmitis. If they had, physicians were asked what was the cause, and whether any of those cases were associated with a specific compounding pharmacy. Physicians were then asked whether the recent Avastin-related events would alter their practice, and if so, how.

The survey also asked ASRS member physicians which compounding pharmacies they use, their criteria for selecting a compounding pharmacy, and whether they were aware of their compounding pharmacy’s safety standards. With this information, the ASRS contacted the major compounding pharmacies identified by its members for detailed information on their safety standards.

“The ASRS is providing online information on compounding pharmacies to our member physicians to help them choose pharmacies with the highest standards of safety,” says Dr. Huang.

“The ASRS is working with the [International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists](#) (IACP), the [Pharmacy Compounding Accreditation Board](#) (PCAB) and ASRS member physicians to better understand the policies, procedures and current practice regarding drug compounding—particularly that of bevacizumab (Avastin),” Dr. Huang adds.

American Society of Retina Specialists is the premier international medical specialty society for ophthalmologists who have completed a retinal fellowship, with more than 2,400 members. The mission of the ASRS is to provide a collegial, open forum for education, to advance the understanding and treatment of vitreoretinal diseases, and to enhance the ability of its members to provide the highest quality of patient care.



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