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"Research from Japan indicates that patients with glaucoma have about twice the accident rate as compared to those without the disease-even when matched for factors such as age, driving experience and conditions," commented Dr. Betancourt. "The most common type of glaucoma-chronic open angle glaucoma-really has no symptoms and sneaks up on patients, causing slow but progressive damage to their field of vision," explained Baltimore Ophthalmologist Brad Spagnolo, M.D. "Thus the need for routine eye exams to establish early detection, diagnosis and treatment," said Dr. Spagnolo.

Prevent Blindness America has designated January as National Glaucoma Awareness Month. "As the most common type of glaucoma has no warning signs or symptoms, it is important for patients to become familiar with their individual risk factors and be diligent about routine eye exams with glaucoma evaluation and testing as recommended by their eye doctor," stressed Andrew Hammer, M.D., an Ophthalmologist at Baltimore Washington Eye Center.

Glaucoma Risk Factors Baby boomers and seniors should note that the risk of developing glaucoma increases for those over the age of 40 and is 6 times greater once you are over 60 years of age. If any family member-especially a sibling-has glaucoma your risk increases 4-9 fold-and this is even greater if you have other systemic or eye diseases that compromise circulation such as diabetes. Race and ethnicity also affects glaucoma risk in that African-Americans have a genetic predisposition that exposes them to a 6-8 fold increased risk, patients of Hispanic descent over the age of 60 seem to be at increased risk and Asians appear to have higher risk for developing a type of glaucoma called narrow angle glaucoma. There is now the suggestion that prolonged use of oral contraceptive birth control pills as well as the early onset of menopause may increase glaucoma risk in women. Anyone suffering from sleep apnea needs to be carefully examined as this condition significantly increases glaucoma risk.

Baltimore Washington Eye Center is a leading eye care practice serving the greater Baltimore and Washington, D.C. area that staffed by a team of Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, Opticians, technical and administrative staff who provide eye examinations for adults and children, laser cataract surgery and intraocular lens implants (IOL), laser vision correction such as LASIK, diagnosis and treatment of cornea disease, care for diseases of the retina including diabetes and age related macular degeneration (AMD) and diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma as well as contact lenses, eyeglasses, eyewear and optical services.

To learn more about Baltimore Washington Eye Center or glaucoma you may visit <http://www.bweyecenter.com>

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