

Unapproved stem cell therapy leaves elderly women blind

[E]ye doctors based primarily at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami had published a [widely covered report describing three eerily similar cases](#): Three elderly women with macular degeneration got stem cells derived from their own fat injected into their eyes at a different stem-cell clinic in Florida. The same thing happened: Their retinas became detached, and they went blind.

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[T]he clinic should have known better. "It's just not a professional thing to take an unproven intervention and inject it in both eyes," says Leigh Turner, a bioethicist at the University of Minnesota, who tracks stem-cell clinics. Kuriyan says that injecting both eyes and asking patients to pay out of pocket for their treatment are both highly unusual for clinical trials. "Those are all big red flags," he says. A better approach, he says, would have been to test the injections in animals for safety first.

It's unclear exactly why the stem-cell injections caused such a bad reaction in these women. Perhaps the stem cells had differentiated into cells that formed a membrane and then contracted, peeling the retina away from the rest of the eye. Or perhaps there was scarring caused by immune cells, which are part of the mix of cells in fat that can be injected along with stem cells into the eye.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [A Woman Went Blind After Stem Cells Were Injected in Her Eyes](#)