

Health magazine



Special Report:
14th Chinese Medical Team
Advances Surgical Care in Ghana
Through Specialized Training
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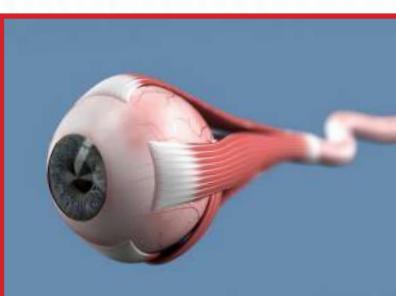
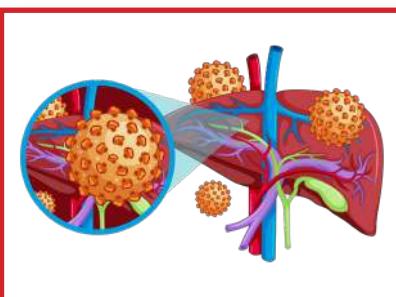
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Men's Health:
The Unseen Link Between
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HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

The Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), based in Ghana, is a non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing healthcare across West Africa. Addressing the uneven distribution of medical resources, HCOWAA advocates for regional cooperation through a Health Alliance that unites healthcare stakeholders to create a cohesive health community.

With a mission to improve health outcomes in West Africa, HCOWAA facilitates collaboration, innovation, and research among professionals, leveraging collective resources to enhance healthcare services, policies, and access. HCOWAA envisions a resilient West African healthcare system where institutions and professionals lead groundbreaking research, foster innovation, and influence policies that elevate regional healthcare.

Through initiatives like establishing a regional healthcare database, launching research projects, and hosting policy roundtables, HCOWAA builds strong networks to drive healthcare advancements. Advocacy efforts focus on equitable access, supporting vulnerable populations, and addressing healthcare disparities. The organization's objectives include fostering research and innovation, supporting health policy reforms, and integrating medical equipment manufacturers with healthcare facilities.

HCOWA also facilitates training programs, academic exchanges, and research grants, ensuring members are equipped with knowledge and skills to address regional health challenges effectively. Networking events like the HCOWA Medical and Health Industry Investment Summit & Expo connect professionals, offering a platform for partnership and knowledge sharing.

HCOWAA's commitment extends to partnerships with international health organizations and academic institutions, which amplify its impact by introducing global best practices and strengthening West African healthcare infrastructure. Collaborative efforts with international partners promote training, research, and infrastructure upgrades for health facilities, pharmaceutical establishments, and clinics.

In addition, HCOWAA's magazine partnerships, including an MoU with Health Pulse Magazine, provide platforms to publish relevant content, share insights, and enhance visibility for ongoing initiatives. Through these combined efforts, HCOWAA aims to foster a collaborative healthcare environment that not only addresses urgent health challenges but also builds a sustainable, inclusive healthcare future for West Africa.

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Glaucoma: Ghana Cannot Afford to Look Away

The launch of World Glaucoma Week is more than a ceremonial observance; it is a timely call to action in the face of a silent but devastating public health threat. Glaucoma, often described as the "silent thief of sight," continues to rob thousands of Ghanaians of their vision, largely because it is detected too late. This year's theme, "Uniting for a Glaucoma-Free World," could not be more relevant. With over 700,000 people living with glaucoma in Ghana and an estimated 60,000 already blind from the condition, the statistics are alarming. Even more concerning is the fact that glaucoma-related blindness is irreversible. Once vision is lost, it cannot be restored—making prevention, early detection, and sustained management the only effective weapons we have.

The week-long activities marking World Glaucoma Week, including public lectures and community outreach, demonstrate the kind of proactive, people-centred approach needed to confront this crisis. Education remains a powerful tool. Many individuals living with glaucoma experience no symptoms in its early stages, which is why routine eye screening is essential, particularly for people over 40, those with a family history of glaucoma, and individuals with underlying health conditions such as diabetes or hypertension.

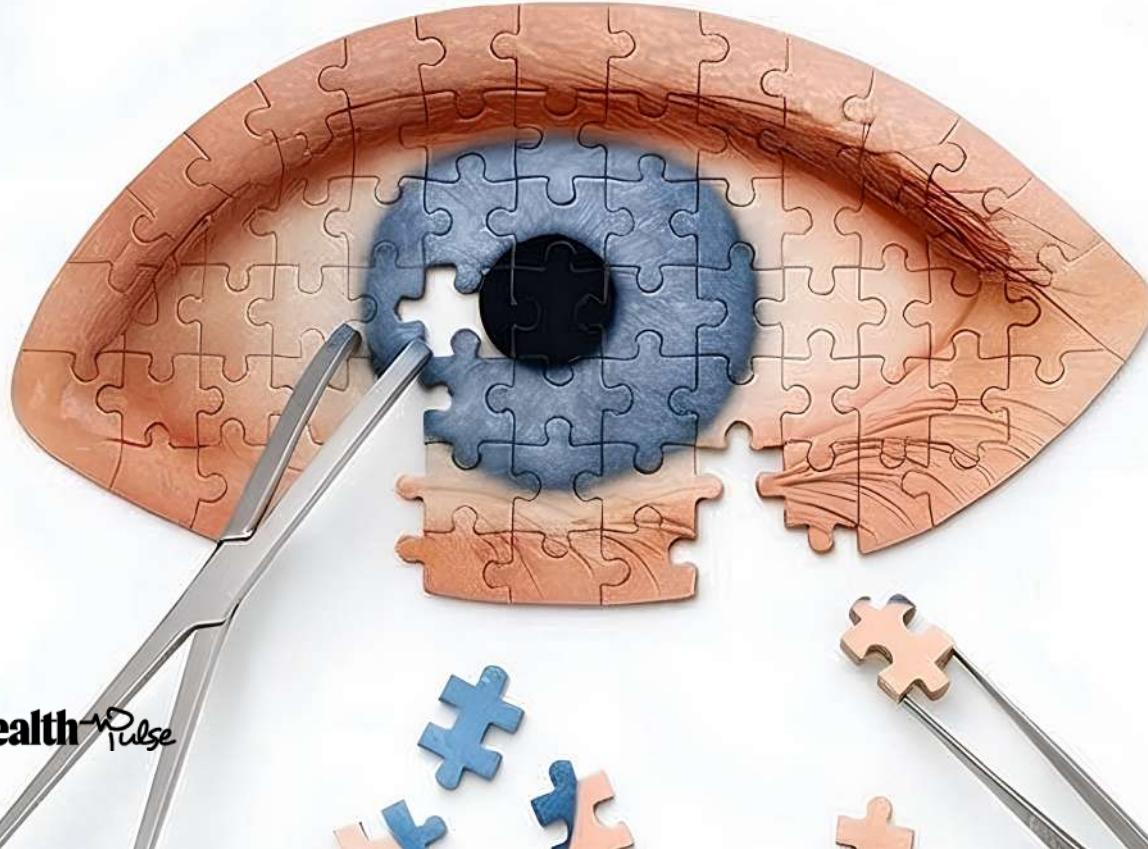
Remarks by health authorities at the launch underscored a critical truth: glaucoma screening

must be treated with the same seriousness as other routine health checks. Calls for intensified public education serve as a reminder that combating glaucoma cannot be left to eye specialists alone. Government agencies, health institutions, the media, civil society, and community leaders all have a role to play in amplifying awareness and changing attitudes toward eye health.

Equally compelling is the warning from glaucoma specialists that the disease accounts for 19.4% of blindness in Ghana. This figure alone should jolt policymakers and the public into urgent action. The simple but powerful message to "go for early screening, protect your sight, and save your sight" captures the essence of what World Glaucoma Week seeks to achieve.

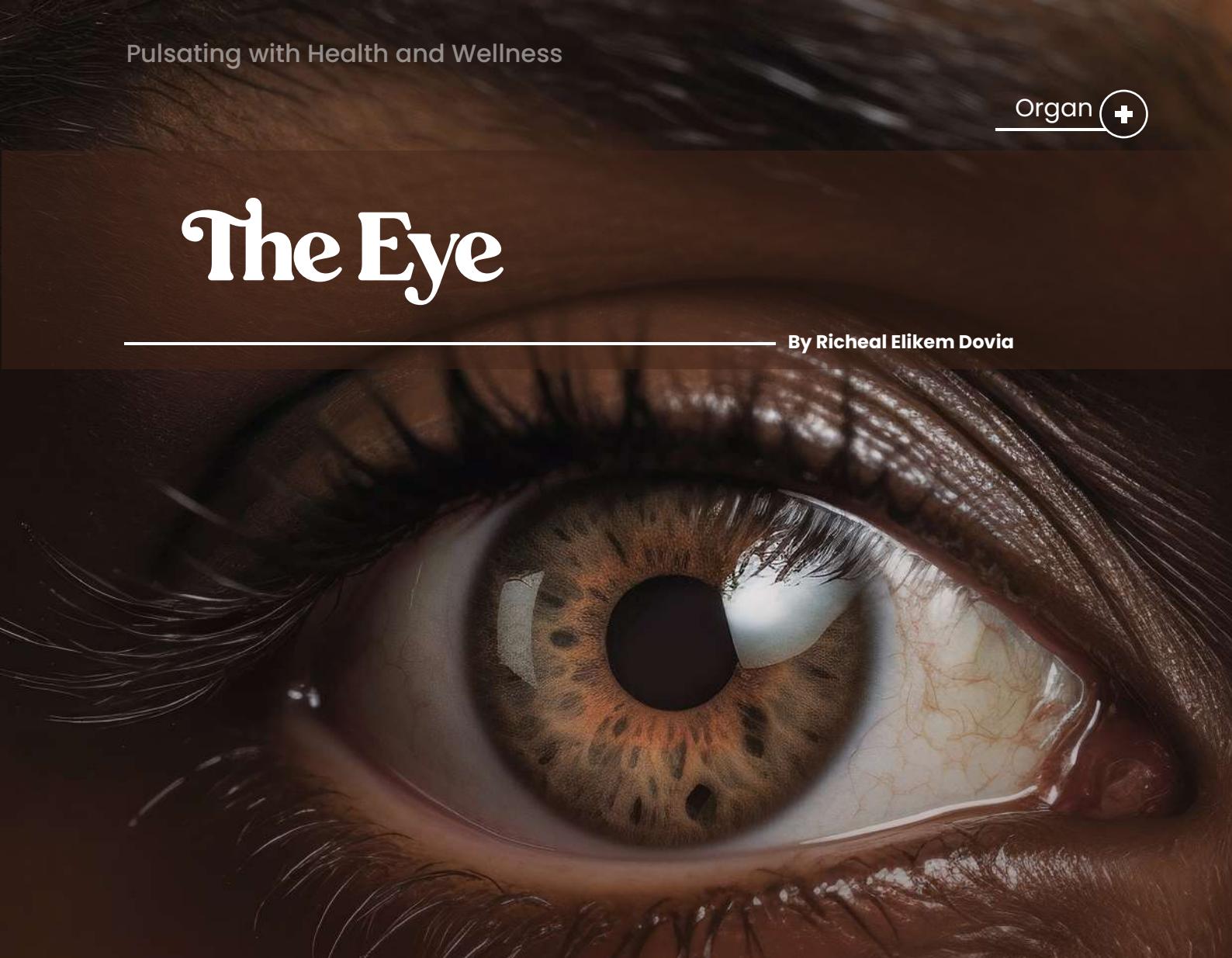
As this global initiative, supported by the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Committee, unfolds, Ghana must seize the moment to strengthen eye health services, expand access to screening, and integrate glaucoma education into routine healthcare delivery. Awareness weeks should spark long-term commitment, not temporary attention.

If we are truly to unite for a glaucoma-free world, then awareness must lead to action, and action must save sight. The cost of inaction is permanent darkness—an outcome Ghana cannot afford.



The Eye

By Richeal Elikem Dovia



The human eye is a remarkable and delicate organ that allows us to interpret the world through sight. From reading and working to recognizing loved ones and navigating our environment, vision plays a central role in everyday life. Despite its importance, eye health is often overlooked until problems arise.

Structurally, the eye functions much like a sophisticated camera. Light enters through the cornea, passes through the pupil, and is focused by the lens onto the retina at the back of the eye. The retina contains specialized cells that convert light into electrical signals, which are transmitted to the brain via the optic nerve, enabling us to see clearly. Any disruption in this process can affect vision quality.

Several eye conditions can impair sight, many of which develop gradually and without early symptoms. Refractive errors, such as myopia and hyperopia, are common and easily corrected with glasses or contact lenses. More serious conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration can lead to partial or complete vision loss if left untreated. Glaucoma, in particular, damages the

optic nerve and is a leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide.

Modern lifestyles also place increasing strain on the eyes. Extended screen time, inadequate lighting, and reduced outdoor activity contribute to digital eye strain, dry eyes, and blurred vision. Additionally, poor nutrition can negatively affect eye health. Nutrients such as vitamin A, lutein, omega-3 fatty acids, and antioxidants are essential for maintaining healthy vision and preventing age-related eye diseases. Regular eye examinations are critical, not only for detecting eye conditions early but also for identifying signs of systemic diseases like diabetes and hypertension, which often manifest in the eyes. Preventive care, including wearing protective eyewear, taking screen breaks, and maintaining a balanced diet, can significantly reduce the risk of vision problems.

In essence, the eye is more than just an organ of sight, it is a vital indicator of overall health. Prioritizing eye care through awareness, healthy habits, and routine check-ups is essential to preserving vision and ensuring long-term wellbeing.

14th Chinese Medical Team Advances Surgical Care in Ghana Through Specialized Training.

By Gloria Addo



In a significant step toward bolstering healthcare delivery, the 14th Chinese Medical Team to Ghana teamed up with the China-Ghana Friendship Hospital (LEKMA Hospital) to host the first-ever **Advanced Training Course in Laparoscopic Minimally Invasive and Cataract Surgery**.

The event, held on Monday, January 12, 2026, at the Lekma Hospital, brought together leading medical experts from both nations to exchange knowledge on cutting-edge surgical techniques.

Opening Ceremony and Strategic Vision:

The advanced training session, organized under the leadership of Captain of the Chinese Medical Team Dr. Yang Yongguang and supported by the host, Medical Superintendent of Lekma Hospital Dr. Akua Gyimah

Asante, focused on strengthening professional capacity in the two critical areas of modern medicine: ophthalmology and laparoscopic surgery.

The program officially commenced with opening remarks delivered by Dr. Yang Yongguang, who welcomed distinguished guests and participants, underscoring the vital role of continuous professional development in strengthening healthcare delivery. He reaffirmed Lekma Hospital's commitment to supporting advanced medical training through international collaboration.

Dr. Fola (Folasade Ojo-Benys), the Clinical Supervisor of Lekma Hospital and Chairperson of the session provided the strategic context for the program, highlighting how the China-Ghana partnership is essential for advancing specialized medical skills in the region. Dr. Fola emphasized that mastering laparoscopic and cataract surgery is a priority for improving patient outcomes within Ghana's healthcare system and encouraged an atmosphere of active knowledge sharing.

Key Highlights of the Academic Exchange

The training session served as a high-level academic exchange between Ghanaian and Chinese medical experts, combining theory with practical clinical insights:





- Cataract Innovation:** Dr. Liang Demao of the China Medical Team led detailed sessions on Phacoemulsification cataract surgery. He outlined step-by-step techniques, intraoperative tips, and best practices. The sessions specifically addressed the management of post-operative corneal edema to help reduce surgical complications.

- Laparoscopic Techniques:** Specialists from Lekma Hospital, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and the Chinese Medical Team explored the core principles of laparoscopic surgery. This included the “art of camera handling,” which is essential for precision in minimally invasive procedures. Discussions also covered the technical execution of Transabdominal Preperitoneal (TAPP) repair for inguinal hernias, focusing on surgical accuracy and patient safety.

- Gynecological Reflection:** Dr. Zhu Yafei provided expert insights into the application of laparoscopic surgery in gynecology, highlighting its role in reducing recovery times and expanding treatment options for women’s health.

From Theory to the Operating Theater

Moving beyond lectures, the program featured a Live Surgery Demonstration conducted within the theaters of the LEKMA Hospital. Senior medical staff observed real-time procedures, including a general surgery for hernia repair and two complex cataract surgeries. This provided local practitioners with a “front-row seat” to advance minimally invasive methods being performed by seasoned experts like Dr. Yang Yongguang and Dr. Liang Demao.

Strengthening Bilateral Ties

The event was supported by the Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) Association, HCOWA Association Medical & Academic Exchange (HMAEC) Committee, Affiliated Hospital of Guangdong Medical University, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, reflecting a shared commitment to capacity building from both China and Ghana. As the session came to an end, stakeholders emphasized that this training is part of an ongoing “journey” for surgical excellence through international cooperation.

A Woman's Guide to Glaucoma Awareness

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness worldwide, yet it often goes unnoticed until significant vision loss has occurred. For women, understanding glaucoma is especially important, as research shows that women are at a higher risk of developing the condition and living longer with its consequences.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, which is essential for clear vision. This damage is commonly associated with increased pressure inside the eye, although glaucoma can also occur with normal eye pressure. Because the condition usually develops slowly and without pain, many people are unaware they have it until their peripheral (side) vision begins to deteriorate.

Women face unique risk factors when it comes to glaucoma. Hormonal changes linked to pregnancy, menopause, and aging may influence eye pressure and optic nerve health. Additionally, women are more likely to live longer, increasing their lifetime risk of age-related eye diseases. Conditions such as diabetes and hypertension more prevalent among women in later life also raise the risk of developing glaucoma.

There are different types of glaucoma, but primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common and progresses silently. Angle-closure glaucoma, though less common, is more frequent in women and can present suddenly with severe eye pain, blurred vision, headaches, nausea, and seeing halos around lights. This form is a medical emergency and requires immediate attention.

Early detection is the most effective way to prevent vision loss from glaucoma. Regular comprehensive

eye examinations are essential, especially for women over 40, those with a family history of glaucoma, or those living with chronic conditions such as diabetes. These exams can detect changes in eye pressure and optic nerve health long before symptoms appear.

While there is no cure for glaucoma, early treatment through eye drops, laser therapy, or surgery can slow or stop its progression. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, managing chronic conditions, and prioritizing routine eye care all play vital roles in protecting vision. For women, caring for others often comes first, but protecting one's eyesight is an act of self-care. Awareness, early screening, and timely treatment can make the difference between preserved vision and preventable blindness.





Ministerial Focus on Maternal Health Strengthened with UNFPA Support

The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to improving maternal health outcomes, with renewed support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) aimed at reducing preventable maternal deaths and strengthening reproductive health services.

At a recent engagement with key stakeholders, health authorities emphasized that maternal health remains a national priority, particularly in addressing complications related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. The Minister highlighted that despite progress made over the years, challenges such as limited access to quality healthcare, shortages of skilled birth attendants, and delays in emergency obstetric care continue to affect maternal outcomes.

UNFPA's support is focused on enhancing maternal and reproductive health services, including the provision of life-saving medical supplies, strengthening health systems, and improving access to family planning. The agency is also supporting capacity-building initiatives for healthcare workers, especially midwives and frontline providers, to ensure safer pregnancies and deliveries.

Speaking on the collaboration, a UNFPA representative noted that investing in maternal health is not only a health issue but also a development imperative. "Every woman deserves access to quality, respectful, and timely maternal healthcare. Our partnership with the Ministry is aimed at ensuring that no woman

is left behind, especially those in vulnerable and underserved communities," the representative said. The renewed focus also includes community-level interventions such as public education on antenatal care, skilled delivery, and postnatal follow-up. These efforts are expected to improve early health-seeking behavior among pregnant women and reduce risks associated with home deliveries and late referrals.

Health experts have welcomed the initiative, describing it as a critical step toward achieving national and global maternal health targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They stressed that sustained political commitment, adequate funding, and strong partnerships are essential to achieving long-term impact.

With continued ministerial leadership and UNFPA's technical and logistical support, stakeholders remain optimistic that maternal health outcomes will improve, ensuring safer pregnancies and healthier futures for women and families.

Source: moh.Gov



Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS)

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery, commonly known as MIGS, represents a major advancement in the treatment of glaucoma. Designed to lower intraocular pressure with less risk and faster recovery than traditional glaucoma surgeries, MIGS offers hope for many patients, especially those in the early to moderate stages of the disease.

Unlike conventional procedures such as trabeculectomy, MIGS involves tiny incisions and microscopic devices that enhance the eye's natural drainage pathways. These procedures are typically performed through the same small incision used in cataract surgery and are often completed in a short time, usually under local anesthesia.

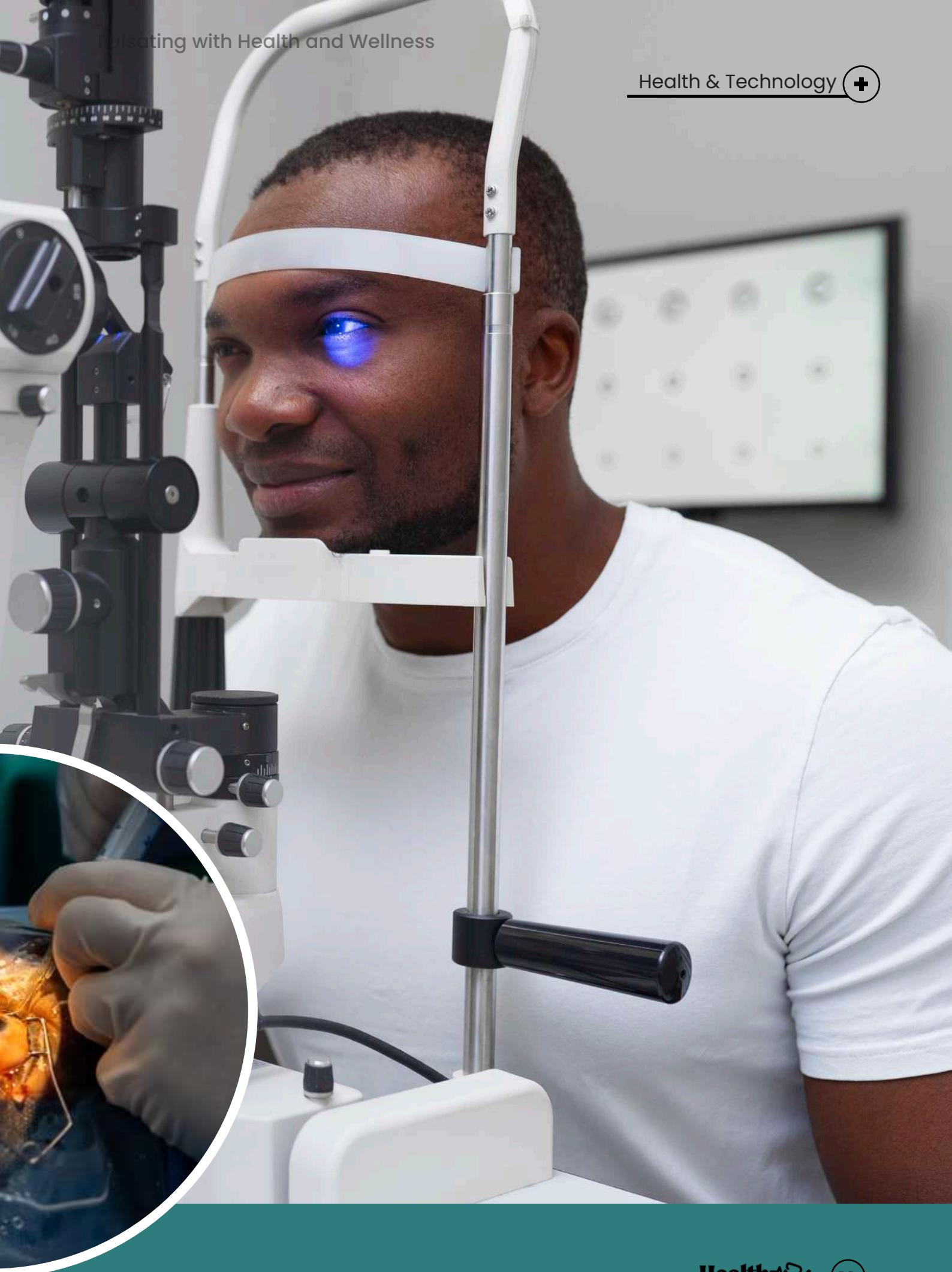
One of the key benefits of MIGS is its high safety profile. Because the procedures are less invasive, patients experience fewer complications, minimal tissue damage, and quicker healing. Most people return to normal activities within a few days. MIGS is particularly beneficial for patients who have difficulty managing daily eye drops or who require better pressure control alongside cataract surgery.

Several MIGS devices are currently in use, each targeting different drainage pathways in the eye. Common examples include the iStent, Hydrus Microstent, and XEN Gel Stent. These tiny implants help improve fluid outflow, thereby reducing pressure inside the eye and slowing damage to the optic nerve.

While MIGS may not be suitable for advanced glaucoma, it is an effective option for many patients with mild to moderate disease. It can reduce dependence on medications and improve long-term quality of life.

As glaucoma care continues to evolve, MIGS stands out as a patient-centered solution, balancing effectiveness with safety. When diagnosed early, and with access to modern treatment options like MIGS, individuals with glaucoma can maintain their vision and live full, active lives.





Burkina Faso Cuts Hepatitis B Infections by Over 80% in Blood Supply

A new national health study reveals a transformative achievement: Hepatitis B infection rates among blood donors in Burkina Faso have collapsed, falling from one of the highest levels in Africa to a historic low of 2.5%. This staggering decline signals that one of the country's most persistent viral threats is now in retreat, thanks to a generation of consistent vaccination.

The research, conducted at the Regional Blood Transfusion Center in Koudougou, documents a public health reversal of historic proportions. A decade ago, studies consistently showed more than one in ten blood donors carried the Hepatitis B virus, which can cause liver failure and cancer. Today, that figure has plummeted to just one in forty.

"This is the result we have been working toward for years," said Professor Jacques Simpore, a lead researcher on the study. "The data confirms our national immunization program is not just a policy—it is a shield that has fundamentally changed the health landscape for an entire generation. We are witnessing the power of prevention."

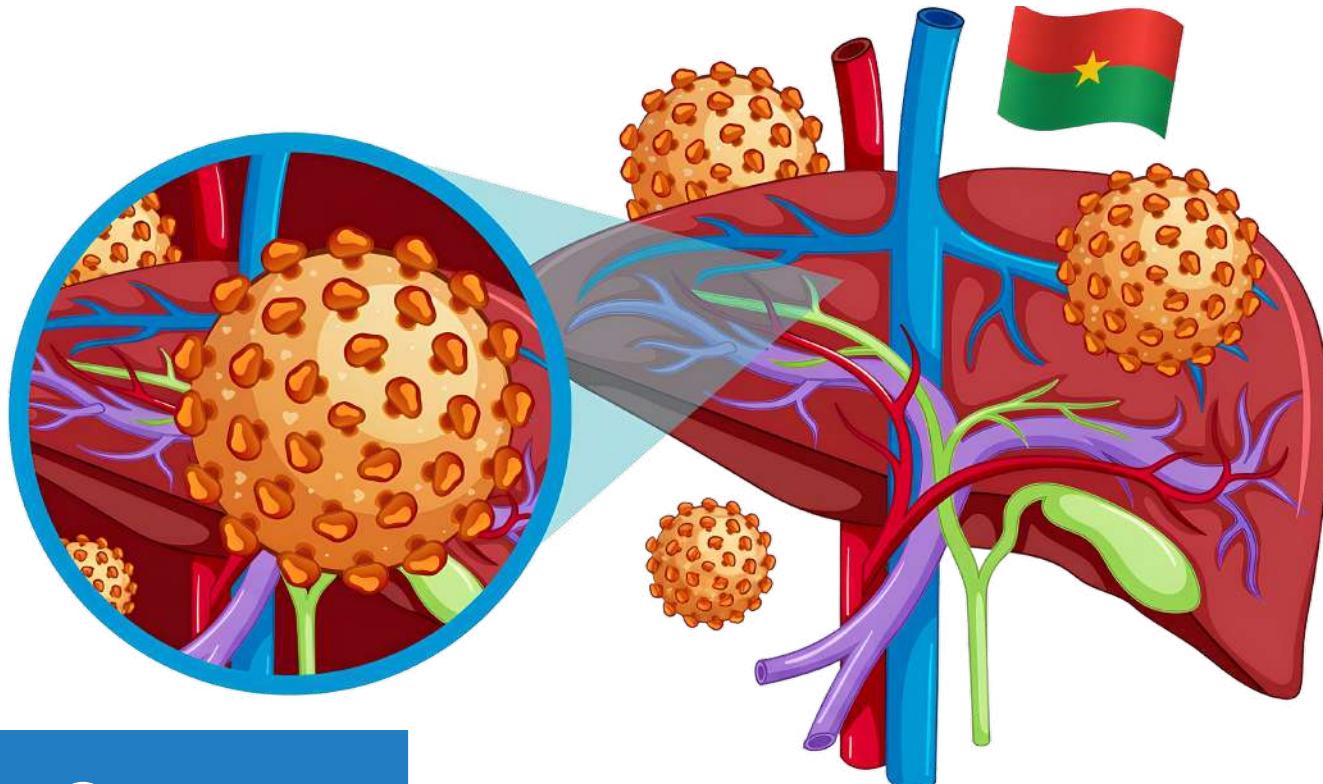
The breakthrough is attributed to Burkina Faso's

steadfast commitment to its Expanded Program on Immunization, which made the Hepatitis B vaccine routine for newborns. For decades, the virus was a leading concern for transfusion safety and a common cause of chronic illness. The new findings suggest the tide has decisively turned, dramatically reducing the risk in the national blood supply and reflecting broader protection across the population.

While health officials emphasize that continued vaccination and screening remain essential, the study paints a clear picture of progress. The dramatic drop in prevalence stands as one of the nation's most significant public health victories in recent years, offering a proven blueprint for combating endemic disease.

The full study is available in the American Journal of Molecular Biology, authored by researchers from the Koudougou Blood Transfusion Center, the Pietro Annigoni Biomolecular Research Centre, and Joseph Ki Zerbo University.

Source: www.scirp.org



People With Good Vision Can't Have Glaucoma

Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor



One of the most pervasive and dangerous myths in eye health is the belief that good, clear vision means you are free from glaucoma. This misconception provides a false sense of security, allowing the disease to advance unchallenged. The stark truth is that people with excellent central vision can, and often do, have glaucoma. In fact, relying on the clarity of your sight to gauge the health of your optic nerve is like judging the structural integrity of a house by the paint on its front door.

This myth persists because of the insidious nature of the most common form, primary open-angle glaucoma. The disease does not target central vision initially. Instead, it begins by eroding the peripheral, or side, vision. This loss happens so gradually that the brain remarkably adapts, filling in gaps and compensating for the missing information. You can read the smallest line on an eye chart, recognize faces with perfect clarity, and yet have significant, irreversible damage occurring in your visual field. By the time symptoms like tunnel vision or noticeable blind spots become apparent to the individual, the disease is often in an advanced stage, with a substantial portion of the optic nerve already destroyed.

The absence of symptoms in the early and

middle stages is precisely what makes regular, comprehensive eye exams non-negotiable. These exams go far beyond reading a standard Snellen chart. A crucial part of glaucoma screening involves tonometry to measure intraocular pressure, ophthalmoscopy to examine the health and color of the optic nerve, and perimetry to map the complete field of vision and detect those peripheral losses you cannot feel. These tests can identify glaucoma long before you notice a single change in your own sight.

The bottom line is this: Glaucoma is not a disease of symptoms; it is a disease of signs detectable by an eye care professional. Your best defense is not the subjective clarity of your vision, but the objective data from a dilated eye exam. Regardless of how perfectly you see the world, everyone over 40, and those with risk factors like family history, diabetes, or high nearsightedness earlier, should commit to regular check-ups.



Coping With The Anxiety And Uncertainty Of A Glaucoma Diagnosis

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

The journey of glaucoma is often described not in dramatic events, but in quiet, imperceptible shifts. It is a disease of the periphery, stealing sight from the edges in a gradual process that can advance significantly before a person notices. This very nature of its silent, progressive creep generates a profound and often unspoken psychological burden, one that extends far beyond the physical eyes to deeply impact mental and emotional health. A glaucoma diagnosis can cast a long shadow of fear and uncertainty about the future, making the preservation of mental well-being an essential, though frequently overlooked, part of comprehensive care.

The anxiety begins with the fundamental mechanics of the condition. Knowing that vision loss is happening, or could happen, without immediate warning signs creates a state of hyper-vigilance. Individuals may find themselves constantly testing their peripheral vision, questioning the clarity of their sight, or fearing that each minor eye discomfort signals progression. This relentless self-monitoring is emotionally exhausting and can fuel significant health-related anxiety. The primary tool for managing this fear—rigorous, lifelong adherence to daily eye drop regimens—itself becomes a source of stress. The weight of knowing that one missed dose could contribute to irreversible damage is a heavy psychological load to carry which further impacts mental health.

Furthermore, the uncertainty of glaucoma's trajectory feeds a deep-seated worry about future independence and identity. Vision is intimately tied to how we navigate the world, work, engage in hobbies, and connect with loved ones. The prospect of losing this central sense can trigger anticipatory grief, mourning for a future self and a way of life that feels threatened. Questions about the ability to drive, read, recognize faces, or maintain one's career become persistent mental intrusions, leading to feelings of vulnerability and depression.

Addressing this mental toll is therefore not a secondary concern but a critical component of living well with glaucoma. It begins with open communication. Healthcare providers must create space for patients to express their fears, not just their physical symptoms. Normalizing these anxieties can be incredibly validating. Building a strong support system is equally vital—connecting with understanding family and friends, or joining a support group with others who share this specific experience, can alleviate the isolating burden.





When Eye Creams and Makeup Collide with Glaucoma Care

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

For millions, the daily ritual of skincare is an act of self-care, a dedicated practice to protect and nurture the skin. This is especially true for the delicate orbital area, where targeted creams, serums, and concealers are meticulously applied to combat wrinkles, puffiness, and dark circles. However, beneath the surface of this wellness routine lies an under-recognized risk: the migration of these products into the ocular ecosystem.

The anatomy of the eye area makes it uniquely vulnerable. When we apply lotions, oils, or makeup near the lash line or on the eyelids, these formulations do not remain in place. With natural blinking, facial expressions, and even body heat, product components can migrate across the ocular surface. They enter the tear film, the delicate, multi-layered fluid that protects and lubricates the eye. This intrusion is anything but harmless. Ingredients like preservatives, fragrances, certain emulsifiers, and heavy oils can destabilize the tear film, strip its protective oils, and directly irritate the surface of the eye. The result is often a cascade of issues: immediate stinging and redness, chronic dry eye symptoms, inflammation, and crucially, meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD). These tiny glands along the eyelids are responsible for secreting the oily layer of the tear film that prevents evaporation. When they become clogged or compromised by external product residues, their function falters, leading to rapid tear evaporation and severe, persistent dry eye.

Therefore, an informed skincare strategy becomes a non-negotiable pillar of holistic glaucoma management. The goal is not to abandon eye-area care, but to practice it with deliberate caution. Opting for ophthalmologist-tested or "eye-safe" products that are formulated without fragrances, parabens, and other harsh preservatives is a critical first step. Application technique is equally vital; products should be carefully placed only on the orbital bone, avoiding the lid margin and lashes entirely. A disciplined and gentle makeup removal routine using safe, non-irritating cleansers is essential to prevent overnight migration. Most importantly, this dialogue must be brought into the ophthalmologist's office. Patients should openly discuss their skincare and makeup routines with their eye doctor, who can provide personalized recommendations and better understand the full picture of their ocular surface health.





Tirzepatide and Glaucoma Risk: What New Evidence Suggests for People with Type 2 Diabetes.

By Gloria Addo

World Glaucoma Day, observed annually shines a global spotlight on glaucoma a leading cause of irreversible blindness that often progresses without warning signs. The day underscores the importance of early detection, regular eye examinations, and increased awareness, particularly among high-risk groups such as people living with diabetes.

As research continues to reveal links between systemic health and eye disease, new findings on diabetes treatments and their potential impact on glaucoma risk are especially timely, offering fresh insights into how modern therapies may help protect vision while managing chronic conditions.

Glaucoma remains one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness worldwide, and people living with type 2 diabetes mellitus face a higher risk of developing this silent eye disease. As diabetes care rapidly evolves, attention is increasingly turning to how newer medications may influence not only blood sugar control and weight loss, but also long-term complications beyond the heart and kidneys – including eye health. Emerging evidence now

suggests that tirzepatide, a dual incretin therapy, may be associated with a significantly lower risk of glaucoma compared with selective glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists.

A large retrospective cohort study has found that adults with type 2 diabetes who initiated tirzepatide experienced reduced rates of primary open-angle glaucoma, ocular hypertension, and the need for first-line glaucoma treatment. These findings raise important questions about the broader protective effects of modern diabetes therapies and their potential role in preserving vision.

How the Study Was Conducted

The study analysed data from a nationwide electronic health records network covering the period from June 2022 to May 2025. Researchers focused on adults with type 2 diabetes who were newly started on either tirzepatide or a selective GLP-1 receptor agonist.





To ensure reliable comparisons, several groups were excluded from the analysis, including patients with previous exposure to either medication class, those who had recently added a second-line glucose-lowering drug, and individuals with existing glaucoma, prior glaucoma surgery, or a history of ocular trauma. Data were drawn from 71 healthcare organisations across the United States, providing a broad and diverse patient population.

To minimise bias, investigators used one-to-one propensity score matching. This approach balanced key factors such as age, sex, existing medical conditions, medication use, and prior eye-care visits between the two treatment groups. After matching, 41,849 patients remained in each cohort, allowing for a robust comparison of outcomes.

Key Findings on Glaucoma Risk

The results showed a clear and consistent advantage for tirzepatide. Patients who initiated tirzepatide had a 50 per cent lower risk of developing primary open-angle glaucoma compared with those using selective GLP-1 receptor agonists (risk ratio 0.50; 95% confidence interval 0.34–0.74).

A similar reduction was observed for ocular hypertension, a major risk factor for glaucoma. Tirzepatide users had a 41 per cent lower risk of developing elevated eye pressure (risk ratio 0.59; 95% CI 0.40–0.88). In addition, the need for first-line glaucoma treatment – including medications or surgical intervention – was reduced by nearly half (risk ratio 0.54; 95% CI 0.45–0.64).

Importantly, these protective associations remained consistent among patients who were also using metformin or insulin, suggesting that the observed

benefits were not dependent on background diabetes therapy.

Why These Findings Matter

Sensitivity analyses focusing on adults aged 60 years and older produced comparable results, reinforcing the strength of the association. Further analyses comparing tirzepatide with individual GLP-1 receptor agonists, such as semaglutide and dulaglutide, showed similar trends.

While GLP-1 receptor agonists have previously been linked to potential neuroprotective effects, this study suggests that dual incretin therapy – which targets both GLP-1 and glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) pathways – may offer additional ocular benefits. The exact biological mechanisms remain unclear, but researchers speculate that improved metabolic control, reduced inflammation, and direct neuroprotective actions on the optic nerve may play a role.

Looking Ahead

Although these findings are observational and cannot prove causation, they highlight an important area for future research. Prospective clinical trials and mechanistic studies are needed to determine whether tirzepatide could one day play a role in glaucoma prevention or risk reduction among people with type 2 diabetes.

For clinicians and patients alike, the study reinforces a growing message: diabetes medications may influence far more than blood sugar levels. As treatment decisions increasingly consider whole-body outcomes, preserving vision could become another meaningful benefit of next-generation therapies like tirzepatide.



Study Finds Standard-Dose Yellow Fever Vaccine Critical for Infant Protection During Travel

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor



A pivotal new clinical trial published in *The Lancet* has delivered crucial guidance for families planning international travel with young children: infants may require the full, standard dose of the yellow fever vaccine for adequate protection, challenging previous assumptions about lower-dose effectiveness.

The randomized, double-blind study, published on January 13, 2026, specifically investigated the immune response in infants aged 9 to 12 months. It compared the standard vaccine dose (containing over 13,000 International Units) with a much lower, fractional dose of 500 IU. The results were clear: while 99% of infants receiving the standard dose showed a robust immune response (seroconversion) after 28 days, that number dropped to 93% for the low-dose group.

The difference of -6.15 percentage points led researchers to conclude that the evidence supporting fractional dosing in adults does not apply to infants, who likely need the higher standard dose to ensure long-term immunity against the potentially fatal mosquito-borne virus.

"This study reinforces a core principle in vaccinology: one size does not fit all, especially across age groups," commented a travel medicine expert. "For infants traveling to endemic regions like parts of Brazil, Africa, and other at-risk areas, relying on a fractional dose could leave them vulnerable." Fractional dosing has been a strategy employed during yellow fever outbreaks to stretch vaccine



supply, typically using one-fifth of the standard dose. The new data suggests this approach is not suitable for routine pediatric vaccination programs.

Both dosing groups in the trial showed comparable safety profiles, with serious adverse events reported as unrelated to the vaccination.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends the YF-VAX vaccine for children aged 9 months and older who are traveling to or living in areas where yellow fever is a risk or where proof of vaccination is required for entry.

"This research provides valuable evidence for clinicians and parents making decisions about travel health," said Don Hackett, publisher of Vax-Before-Travel. "It underscores the importance of consulting a travel medicine specialist well before departure to ensure the correct, evidence-based protocols are followed for every member of the family."

Travel health clinics are equipped to provide the FDA-approved YF-VAX vaccine and country-specific advice. Infants under 9 months, pregnant women, and individuals with specific severe allergies or immunocompromising conditions are generally advised not to receive the vaccine. Parents planning international travel are urged to schedule a pre-travel consultation at least 4-6 weeks before departure to allow time for vaccines to become fully effective.

Source: Vax-Before-Travel



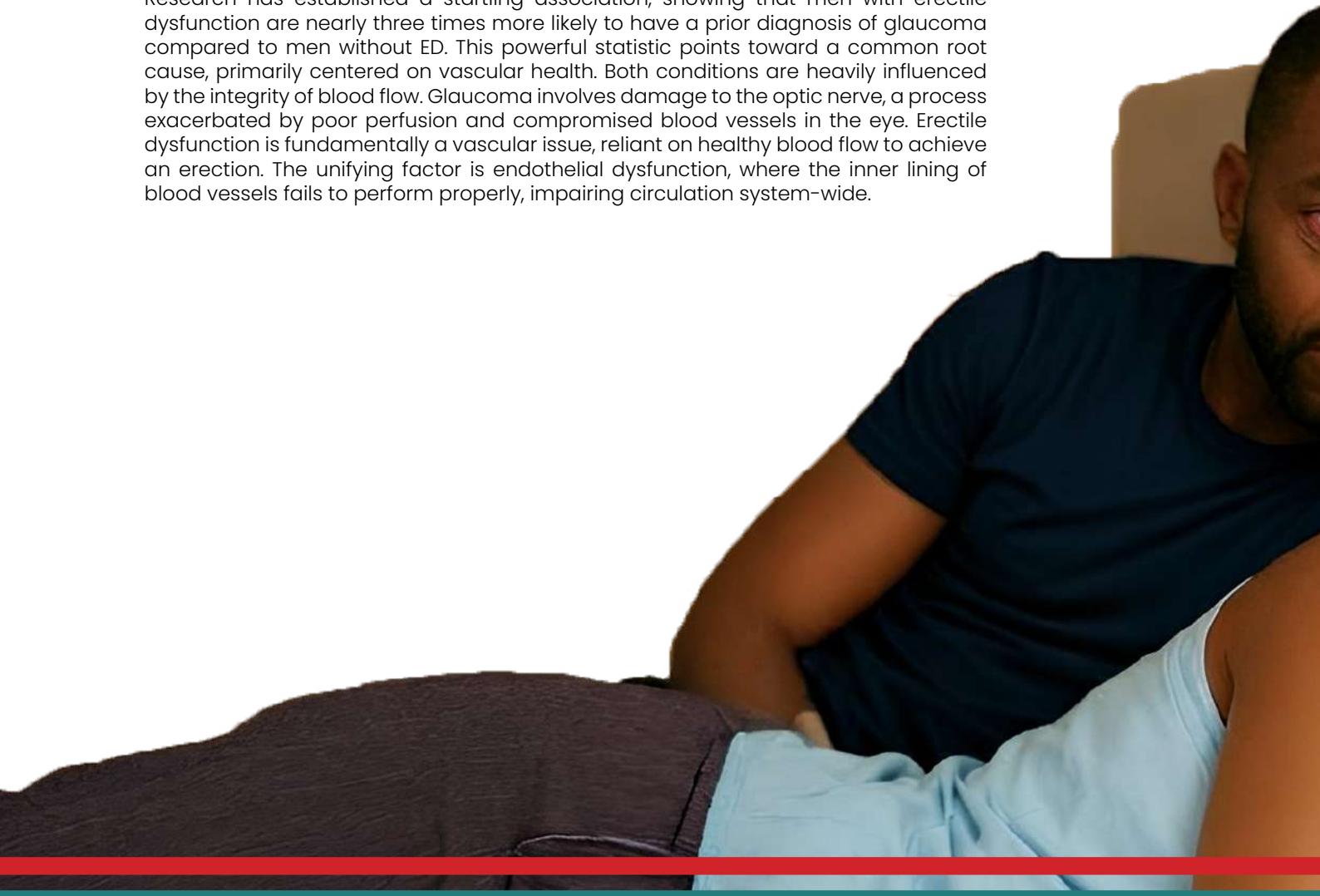


The Unseen Link Between Glaucoma and Erectile Dysfunction

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

When we think of men's health, topics like heart health, prostate screenings and mental well-being often come to mind. Rarely do we consider eye health as a central player. However, emerging research is revealing a compelling and significant link between one of the leading causes of blindness open-angle glaucoma and erectile dysfunction (ED), urging a more integrated view of men's overall wellness.

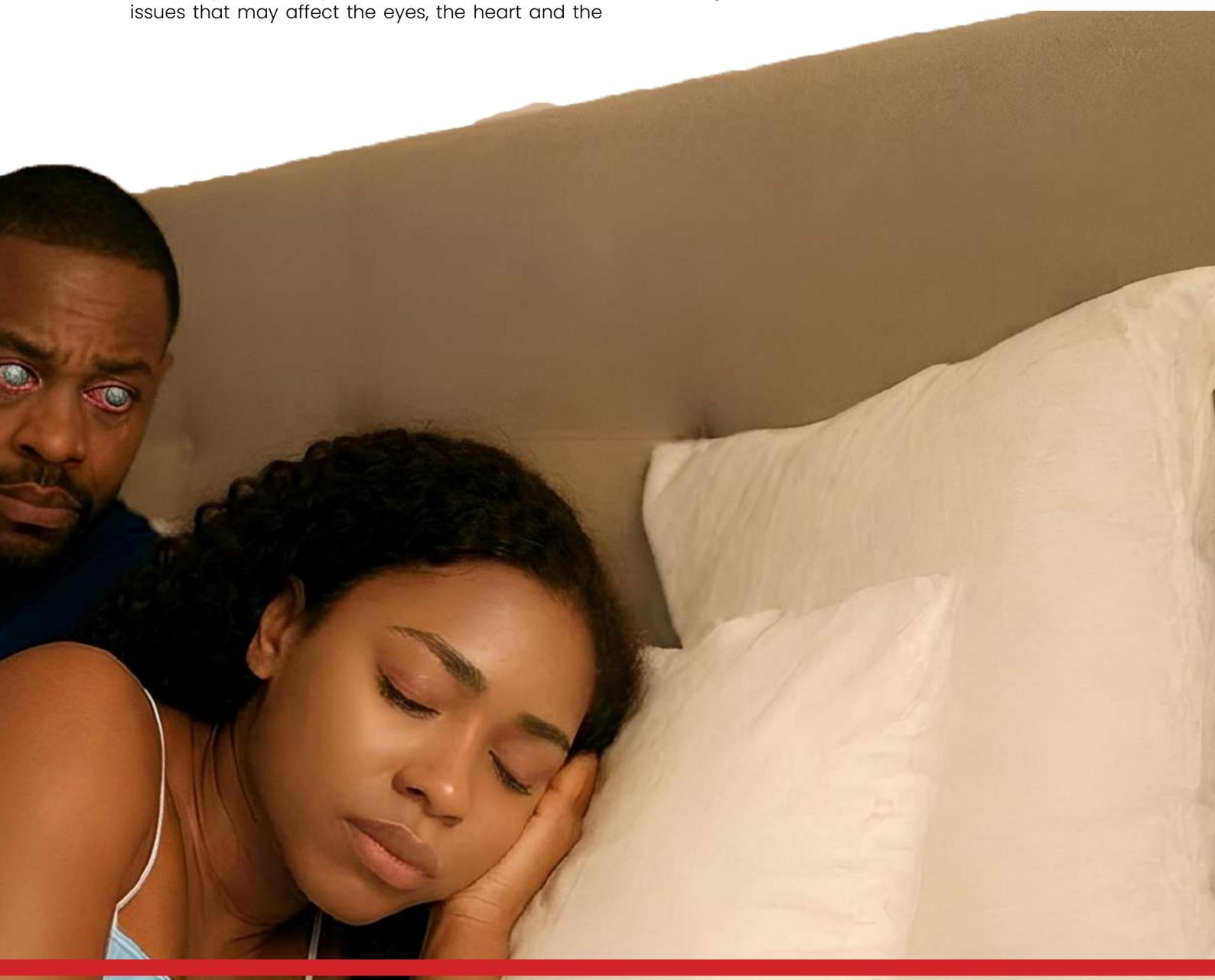
Research has established a startling association, showing that men with erectile dysfunction are nearly three times more likely to have a prior diagnosis of glaucoma compared to men without ED. This powerful statistic points toward a common root cause, primarily centered on vascular health. Both conditions are heavily influenced by the integrity of blood flow. Glaucoma involves damage to the optic nerve, a process exacerbated by poor perfusion and compromised blood vessels in the eye. Erectile dysfunction is fundamentally a vascular issue, reliant on healthy blood flow to achieve an erection. The unifying factor is endothelial dysfunction, where the inner lining of blood vessels fails to perform properly, impairing circulation system-wide.



The role of advancing age further intertwines these conditions, as the prevalence and severity of both increase over time. Age-related changes like arterial stiffening and reduced vascular elasticity contribute simultaneously to the risk of optic nerve damage and sexual dysfunction, making comprehensive health vigilance after forty essential.

Ultimately, this connection serves as a crucial reminder that the body's systems do not operate in isolation. A diagnosis of erectile dysfunction can be an important early indicator of broader vascular issues that may affect the eyes, the heart and the

brain. Men are encouraged to foster dialogue between their eye doctors and primary care physicians, understanding that protecting vision and preserving sexual health are interconnected goals. Embracing a lifestyle that supports cardiovascular wellness—through managed blood pressure, a heart-healthy diet, regular exercise, and avoiding tobacco—benefits not just one aspect of health but offers protection for both sight and sexual function. Recognizing this link is a vital step toward integrated, preventative healthcare that safeguards overall well-being.





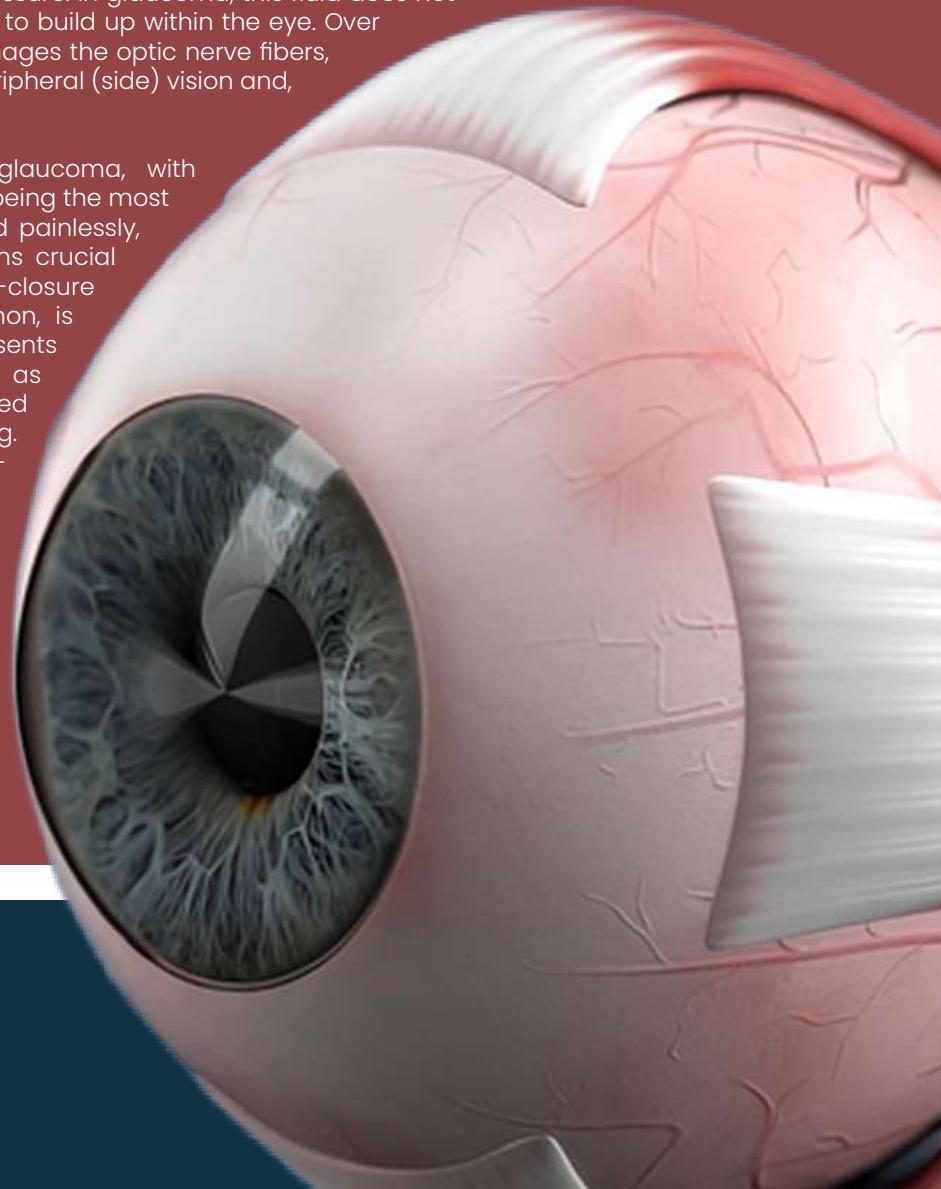
Glaucoma: The Silent Thief of Sight That Damages the Optic Nerve

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually damage the optic nerve, the vital connection between the eye and the brain. This damage is often linked to increased pressure inside the eye and can lead to permanent vision loss if not detected and treated early. Because it usually develops without noticeable symptoms in its early stages, glaucoma is widely known as the "silent thief of sight."

Under normal conditions, a clear fluid called aqueous humour flows in and out of the eye, maintaining healthy eye pressure. In glaucoma, this fluid does not drain properly, causing pressure to build up within the eye. Over time, the elevated pressure damages the optic nerve fibers, leading to progressive loss of peripheral (side) vision and, eventually, central vision.

There are several types of glaucoma, with primary open-angle glaucoma being the most common. It develops slowly and painlessly, making regular eye examinations crucial for early detection. Angle-closure glaucoma, though less common, is a medical emergency and presents with sudden symptoms such as severe eye pain, headache, blurred vision, nausea, and vomiting. Other forms include normal-tension glaucoma, where optic



nerve damage occurs despite normal eye pressure, and congenital glaucoma, which affects infants and young children.

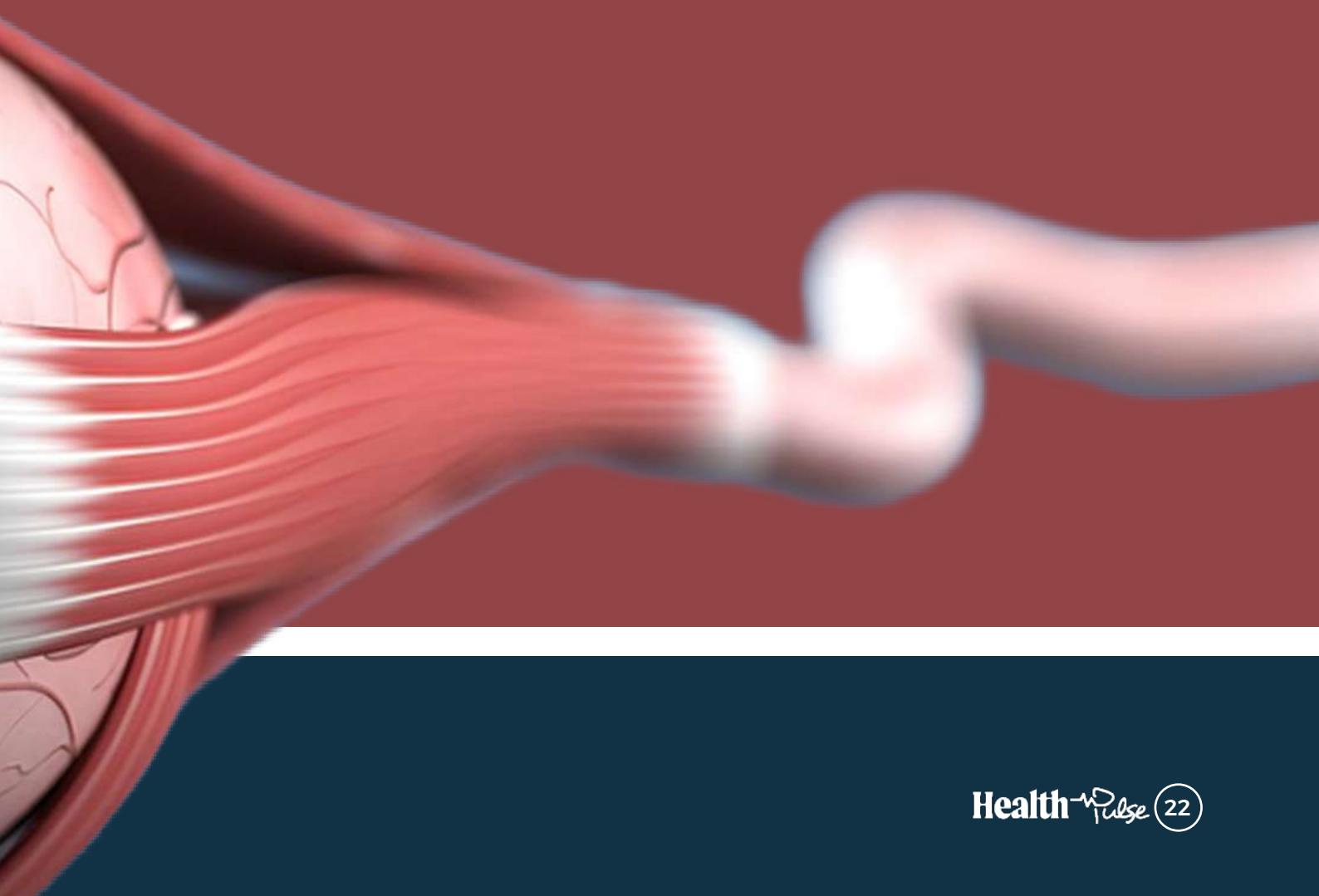
Risk factors for glaucoma include increasing age, a family history of the disease, African ancestry, diabetes, high blood pressure, prolonged use of corticosteroid medications, and eye injuries. People over the age of 40, especially those with these risk factors, are encouraged to have regular comprehensive eye exams.

Symptoms of glaucoma often appear only after significant vision loss has occurred. Early signs may include gradual loss of peripheral vision, difficulty seeing in low light, halos around lights, or blurred vision. Because lost vision cannot be restored, early diagnosis is essential to prevent

further damage.

Diagnosis involves measuring intraocular pressure, examining the optic nerve, testing peripheral vision, and assessing the thickness of the cornea. While there is no cure for glaucoma, treatment can effectively slow or halt its progression. Management options include prescription eye drops, oral medications, laser therapy, and surgery, all aimed at reducing eye pressure.

In conclusion, glaucoma is a serious but manageable eye condition. Public awareness, routine eye screenings, and early treatment are key to preserving vision and preventing blindness. Protecting eye health today can safeguard sight for a lifetime.



Eye Exams: A Lifelong Wellness Strategy for Protecting Vision

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

Health professionals around the world consistently emphasize that regular eye care is not a luxury but a vital part of lifelong wellness. Yearly comprehensive eye examinations especially those that include optic nerve assessments play a critical role in preserving vision and preventing irreversible eye diseases such as glaucoma. From a health and wellness perspective, early detection through routine eye checks can make a life-long difference in maintaining independence, productivity, and overall quality of life.

Many eye conditions develop silently, showing little or no symptoms in their early stages. Glaucoma, for instance, can gradually damage the optic nerve without pain or noticeable vision changes until significant and permanent loss has occurred. This is why health professionals strongly

recommend annual eye examinations, particularly for adults aged 40 and above. As the body ages, the risk of eye diseases increases, making preventive screening an essential component of healthy ageing.

Certain individuals face an even higher risk and should be especially vigilant. People with a family history of eye diseases, those living with diabetes or high blood pressure, and individuals with elevated intraocular pressure are more likely to develop vision-threatening conditions. For these groups, routine eye exams are not just preventive—they are lifesaving for vision.

Detecting changes early allows for timely treatment that can slow or stop disease progression before daily activities such as reading, driving, or working are affected.



From a wellness standpoint, eye health is closely connected to overall health. Conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease can directly impact the eyes, making regular eye checks an important window into broader health concerns. Comprehensive eye exams often reveal early signs of systemic diseases, reinforcing the role of eye care in holistic health monitoring.

Incorporating eye exams into regular wellness routines reflects a proactive approach to health. Just as individuals schedule annual medical checkups, dental visits, or blood pressure screenings, eye examinations should be viewed as essential self-care. Alongside professional care, healthy lifestyle choices such as balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, stress management, and avoiding smoking support long-term eye health and complement medical interventions.

Ultimately, protecting vision is about protecting quality of life. Sight enables connection, independence, and productivity across every stage of life. By prioritizing yearly comprehensive eye examinations, especially after age 40 or when risk factors are present, individuals take a powerful step toward safeguarding their vision for the future. Early detection is not merely a medical advantage it is a lifelong investment in wellness.





Eye-Protective Green Power Stew

This recipe supports eye health and may help reduce the risk of glaucoma progression, but it does not replace medical treatment. People diagnosed with glaucoma should continue prescribed eye drops and follow medical advice.

Ingredients

1 cup dark leafy greens (kontomire/ spinach/kale)
 ½ cup broccoli florets
 1 medium carrot, grated
 1 small onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed or chia seeds
 ½ cup tomatoes, blended or chopped
 1 small piece ginger, grated
 1 cup light vegetable or fish stock

Salt (small amount)

Optional: smoked fish or beans for protein

Preparation

1. Heat olive oil in a pot over low heat.
2. Add onions, garlic, and ginger. Sauté gently until fragrant.
3. Stir in tomatoes and cook for 3–5 minutes.
4. Add carrots and broccoli, then pour in stock.
5. Simmer for 5–7 minutes until vegetables are tender.
6. Add leafy greens and cook briefly (2–3 minutes) to preserve nutrients.
7. Stir in ground flaxseed or chia seeds.
8. Season lightly with salt and remove from heat.



Understanding the Genetic Link of Glaucoma

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

Glaucoma is often called the "silent thief of sight" for a reason. It can progress for years without any noticeable symptoms, all while causing irreversible damage to the optic nerve. One of the most significant, yet frequently overlooked, risk factors is sitting right at your family dinner table: your genetics. Understanding that glaucoma runs in families is the first and most crucial step in protecting generations of vision.

If you have a close relative a parent, sibling, or child diagnosed with glaucoma, your risk of developing the condition increases by four to nine times. This strong hereditary link means that a diagnosis in one family member should serve as an immediate alert for all others. The disease doesn't discriminate by age in high-risk families; while primary open-angle glaucoma is more common after 60, early-onset forms can affect younger adults. This makes family-wide awareness not just important, but urgent.

The power to change the narrative lies in proactive, collective action. The single most important thing a family can do is commit to regular, comprehensive eye exams. These are different from standard vision tests for glasses. A comprehensive exam includes a painless procedure called tonometry to measure eye pressure, an inspection of the optic nerve, and a visual field test to check for peripheral vision loss—the hallmark of glaucoma. Experts recommend

that individuals with a family history start these screenings by age 40, or even earlier if the family history is particularly strong.

Beyond screenings, families can adopt lifestyle habits that support overall eye health. Maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure supports good blood flow to the optic nerve. Protecting eyes from serious injury with safety glasses during sports or home projects is essential. Some evidence also suggests that regular, moderate exercise may help reduce intraocular pressure. While these habits are beneficial, they are not a substitute for medical screening; they work in tandem with professional care.

Fostering open conversations about eye health can break down barriers of fear or denial. Share family medical history with all relatives and encourage each other to schedule and keep eye appointments. Make it a family priority, much like annual physicals or dental check-ups.

Glaucoma may be hereditary, but blindness from glaucoma is not inevitable. By transforming a family history of risk into a family culture of proactive care, you can safeguard the precious gift of sight for yourselves and for generations to come. Start the conversation today: your family's vision depends on it.





Can Glaucoma Be Prevented or Only Managed?

Glaucoma is a leading cause of irreversible blindness, often developing without early warning signs. This makes many people wonder whether the condition can be prevented or only managed. While there is no guaranteed way to prevent glaucoma, early detection and proper care can significantly reduce the risk of vision loss. Glaucoma occurs when fluid in the eye does not drain properly, causing pressure to build up and damage the optic nerve, which transmits visual information to the brain. Because symptoms appear late, regular eye screening and protective lifestyle choices are key to preserving sight. Glaucoma is often called the "silent thief of sight" because vision loss occurs gradually and cannot be reversed once it happens. However, adopting protective habits and seeking early care can significantly reduce the risk and slow disease progression.

Eye injuries, particularly blunt trauma, can damage the eye's drainage system, leading to a buildup of intraocular pressure (IOP) and optic nerve damage. Wearing protective eyewear such as safety goggles or face shields can prevent over 90% of eye injuries, making eye protection a simple but powerful preventive measure.

Beyond injury, several risk factors increase the likelihood of developing glaucoma. These include being over 60, long-term steroid use, a family history of glaucoma, African, Hispanic, or Asian ancestry, high eye pressure, extreme nearsightedness or farsightedness, and having a thin cornea. PeopleSi pat, quam pracibu spiculati, corei ilinatus. Dum publis, sularce quitremnorum in





prescribed steroid medications should discuss risks with their healthcare provider and limit use where possible.

Regular comprehensive eye exams are essential, especially for individuals at higher risk. While glaucoma-related vision loss is permanent, early detection allows treatment to preserve remaining sight.

Lifestyle choices also matter. Moderate caffeine intake is generally safe, but people with a genetic risk for high eye pressure should limit excessive coffee consumption. Individuals with glaucoma should avoid activities involving prolonged head-down positions, such as certain yoga poses or inversion therapies, as these can raise eye pressure.

Diet plays a role as well. Leafy green vegetables rich in nitrates—such as spinach, kale, and lettuce—have been linked to a reduced risk of glaucoma. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, stress reduction, and meditation can help lower eye pressure. Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol intake may further protect eye health.

For those diagnosed with glaucoma, strict adherence to prescribed medications is critical. Eye drops help control eye pressure and prevent further damage, even though they do not restore lost vision.

Written by_ Christine L. Larsen, MD, Medical Expert Board Member Ophthalmologist



Exercises and Tips for Healthy Vision

By Gloria Addo

With our growing reliance on screens—whether for work, social media, or entertainment—eye fatigue has become an increasingly common concern. Prolonged computer use and endless digital scrolling put a strain on our eye muscles, which can impact vision over time. But just like any other muscle in the body, the eyes can benefit from regular exercise. Strengthening eye muscles not only reduces fatigue but also supports overall eye health and visual comfort.

How to Strengthen Eye Muscles

Incorporating simple exercises into your daily routine can significantly improve eye muscle strength and relieve strain:

- Palming: Rub your hands together to generate warmth, then gently cup them over your closed eyes. This relaxes the eyes and reduces tension.
- Focus Shifting: Hold your thumb at arm's length and alternate your focus between it and a distant object. This improves flexibility and sharpens focus.
- Eye Rolling: Roll your eyes in a full circle clockwise, then counterclockwise. This keeps muscles flexible and eases tension.
- Near and Far Focus: Alternate your gaze between a nearby object and one at a distance, holding each for 10 seconds. This enhances eye coordination.
- Figure 8 Exercise: Imagine a large figure 8 in front of you and trace it with your eyes. This strengthens tracking ability and muscle control.
- Blinking Breaks: Blink intentionally every 20 minutes during screen use to maintain eye moisture and prevent dryness.
- Four-Direction Exercise: Move your eyes up, down, left, and right while keeping your head still. Hold each direction for a few seconds and repeat three times.

Essential Tips for Eye Health

- Practice Good Screen Habits: Keep screens an arm's length away, slightly below eye level, adjust brightness comfortably, and use blue-light filters

when possible.

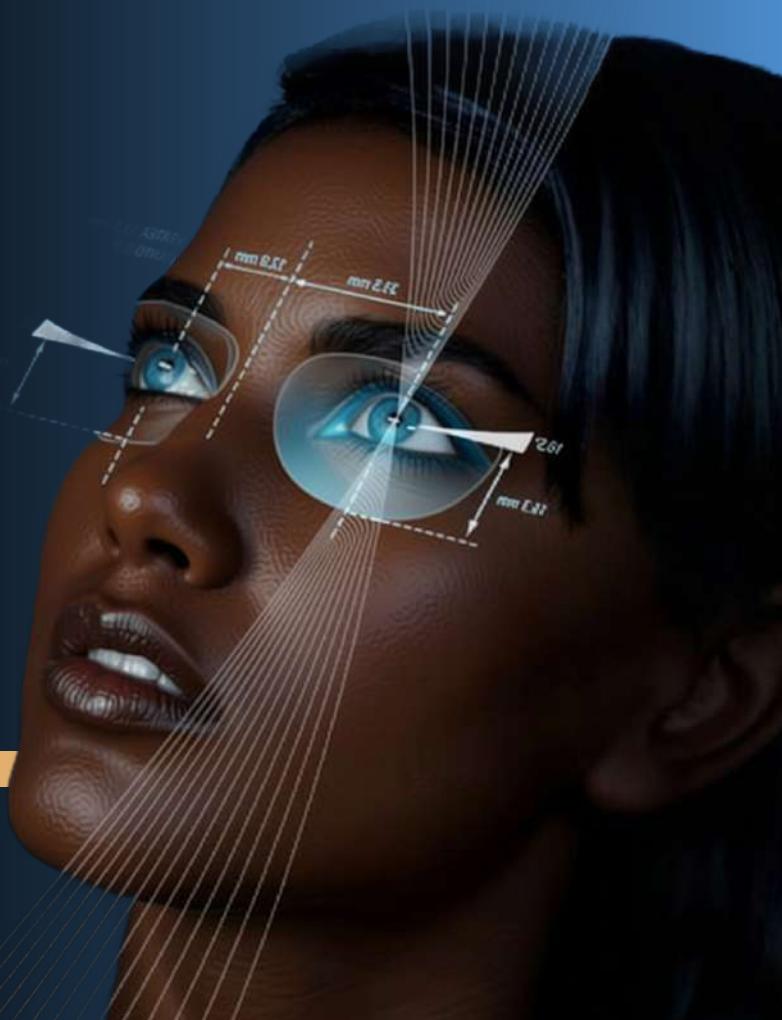
- Ensure Proper Lighting: Work in soft, balanced light to reduce glare and strain. Avoid dim or harsh lighting.
- Eat a Balanced Diet: Nutrients like vitamins A, C, and E, plus omega-3 fatty acids, support eye health. Include leafy greens, carrots, fish, nuts, and citrus fruits.

Benefits of Eye Exercises

Regular eye exercises reduce fatigue, prevent blurred vision, and support the treatment of conditions like lazy eye or convergence insufficiency. They also improve comfort, focus, and visual clarity, particularly for those who spend long hours in front of screens. Consulting an eye doctor can help tailor exercises to your needs for optimal results.

Conclusion

Eye health is essential for daily comfort and long-term vision preservation. Consistently practicing these exercises, along with healthy screen habits and nutrition, can strengthen your eyes and protect your vision for years to come.





Key Health Terms Related to Glaucoma

Glaucoma

A group of progressive eye disorders characterized by damage to the optic nerve, often associated with elevated intraocular pressure, leading to permanent vision loss.

Optic Neuropathy

Damage or degeneration of the optic nerve fibers, which is the hallmark of glaucomatous disease.

Intraocular Pressure (IOP)

The fluid pressure inside the eye; elevated IOP is the most significant modifiable risk factor for glaucoma.

Aqueous Humour

A transparent fluid produced in the eye that maintains

intraocular pressure and supplies nutrients; impaired outflow leads to pressure buildup.

Trabecular Meshwork

A spongy tissue located at the drainage angle of the eye through which aqueous humour exits; dysfunction contributes to increased IOP.

Primary Open-Angle Glaucoma (POAG)

The most common form of glaucoma, characterized by gradual optic nerve damage and progressive visual field loss without early symptoms.

Angle-Closure Glaucoma

A type of glaucoma caused by obstruction of aqueous humour outflow due to closure of the

drainage angle; may present acutely or chronically.

Normal-Tension Glaucoma

A form of glaucoma in which optic nerve damage occurs despite normal intraocular pressure levels.

Secondary Glaucoma

Glaucoma resulting from another condition or factor such as eye trauma, inflammation, steroid use, or tumors.

Visual Field Defect

Loss or impairment of portions of the visual field, commonly peripheral, due to optic nerve damage.

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