

Laser treatment not effective for AMD

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A U.S. study suggests low-intensity laser treatment for age-related macular degeneration is ineffective in slowing or preventing vision loss.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and 21 other clinical centers found the laser treatments that have been believed beneficial are actually ineffective in preventing complications of age-related macular degeneration, or AMD.

AMD is a disease that gradually destroys sharp, central vision that's needed for such common tasks as reading and driving.

"For the past 35 years, ophthalmologists have wondered about the advisability of employing preventive laser treatment for patients ... at a high risk for vision loss and AMD," said Dr. Stuart Fine, director of the university's department of ophthalmology. "We found that laser treatment had neither a clinically significant beneficial nor harmful effect for these patients."

The research was funded by the National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health.

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