Lasers not effective against vision loss

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Low-intensity laser treatment doesn't prevent vision loss from age-related macular degeneration, a study of U.S. eye centers showed.

The study by the U.S. National Eye Institute in Bethesda, Md., showed the treatment did not stop -- or even slow down -- AMD-related vision loss, WebMD.com said. Paul A. Sieving, institute director, said doctors should reconsider using this treatment.

Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in the United States, WebMD.com said. Warning signs include deposits called drusen under the retina. For years, ophthalmologists tried to prevent AMD-related vision loss by blasting drusen with low-intensity lasers.

The trial enrolled 1,052 people with drusen deposits in each eye, WebMD.com said. The patients were treated by laser in one eye but not the other. Five years later, researchers found no difference in vision between the two eyes.

The research found that while the treatment didn't stop AMD-related vision loss, it didn't cause any harm, either, WebMD.com said.

Results of the study are in the November issue of Ophthalmology.