

An estimated 4 percent of older US men have dry eye disease

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Dry eye disease is common among American men older than 50 and increases with age, high blood pressure, benign prostate disease and the use of antidepressants, according to a report in the June issue of *Archives of Ophthalmology*, one of the JAMA/Archives journals.

Dry eye is one of the most common eye diseases and reason that older adults seek eye care, according to background information in the article. "It is an important public health problem, causing increased risk of ocular infections and bothersome symptoms of ocular discomfort, fatigue and visual disturbance that interfere with crucial activities such as reading, working on a computer and driving a car," the authors write.

Debra A. Schaumberg, Sc.D., O.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues estimated the prevalence of and examined risk factors for dry eye disease among 25,444 U.S. men who participated in the Physicians' Health Study I and II. The men were asked if they had ever been diagnosed with dry eye disease and also whether they had symptoms, including dry or irritated eyes.

Overall, 765 men (3 percent) reported being diagnosed with dry eye, 6.8 percent experienced at least one symptom (dryness or irritation) constantly or often and 2.2 percent reported both symptoms constantly or often. The total age-standardized prevalence of dry eye disease among men 50 and older was estimated to be 4.34 percent. Men 75 years and older were more likely to have the condition—prevalence increased

from 3.9 percent among men age 50 to 54 to 7.7 percent among men age 80 and older. [High blood pressure](#), benign prostatic hyperplasia (a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate) and the use of medications to treat depression, hypertension or hyperplasia were also associated with an increased risk of dry eye disease.

"The present study estimates that approximately 1.68 million men 50 years and older are affected with dry eye disease in the United States," the authors write. "These data, derived from studying more than 25,000 men, show a significantly lower prevalence of dry eye disease than was found in a similar study using the same methods in U.S. women, among whom the prevalence was estimated at 3.23 million women. Nonetheless, there is a significant increase in the prevalence of dry eye disease with age among men, as is the case among women, and there is a predicted growth to 2.79 million U.S. men affected by dry eye disease in 2030."

"Given the increasing recognition of the adverse visual impact of dry [eye disease](#), and the high level of bother patients report because of its irritative symptoms, we hope that these data from a large and well-characterized group of U.S. men will provide further motivation for clinicians and researchers to understand this disease and develop more effective and targeted interventions for patients," they conclude.

Source: JAMA and Archives Journals ([news](#) : [web](#))

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