

Study suggests vision insurance associated with eye-care visits, better reported vision

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Vision insurance for working-age adults appears to be associated with having eye care visits and reporting better vision, compared with individuals without insurance, according to a report published Online First by *Archives of Ophthalmology*.

Millions of Americans experience [vision](#) loss or impairment due to age-related eye diseases, including glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) and cataracts. Periodic checkups are recommended for timely detection of eye conditions to prevent irreversible vision loss. Having vision insurance may be an important determinant as to whether individuals receive preventive eye examinations, according to the study background.

Yi-Jhen Li, M.H.A., of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and colleagues compared the rates of eye care visits and vision impairment among working-age adults with vision insurance and without insurance. The study included 27,152 respondents (between the ages of 40 and 64 years) to the [Behavioral Risk Factor](#) Surveillance Survey 2008 and a subsample of 3,158 respondents (11.6 percent) with glaucoma, ARMD and/or cataract. About 40 percent of the study population and the subsample with [eye disease](#) had no vision insurance.

"Our study empirically tracks an important consequential, process-outcome link both among the total sample of respondents and within the eye-disease subsample. In both groups, respondents who reported having had an eye examination in the prior year, on average, had better vision.

These associations highlight the long-term benefits of vision insurance for preventing eye impairment," the authors note.

Individuals with vision insurance were more likely than those without insurance to report having had eye care visits (general population adjusted odds ratio [AOR], 1.90; glaucoma-ARMD-cataract subsample AOR, 2.15); and report that they have no difficulty recognizing friends across the street (general population AOR, 1.24; eye-disease subsample AOR, 1.45); and have no difficulty reading printed matter ([general population](#) AOR, 1.34; eye-disease subsample AOR, 1.37), according to the study results.

"Lack of vision insurance impedes eye care utilization, which, in turn, may irrevocably affect vision. Vision insurance for preventive [eye care](#) should cease to be a separate insurance benefit and should be mandatory in all health plans," the authors conclude.

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