

Low birth weight could be a risk factor for age-related vision loss

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Medical researchers at the University of Alberta recently published their findings that rats with restricted growth in the womb, causing low birth weights when born, were most susceptible to developing age-related vision loss, compared to their normal weight counterparts. The research team members say additional work needs to be done to see if this same link exists in people, and if it does, doctors will need to better monitor vision concerns in adults who were born with a low birth weight.

"The consequence of our findings is that we are providing evidence for the need for clinicians to log birth weights of their patients when assessing health," says Yves Sauvé, the lead Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry researcher on the team.

"Most age-related eye diseases fall in the category of complex diseases, meaning that many factors can compound the severity of the risk, and birth weight could be one of those factors. Our finding points to the need to pursue more studies on the potential link between low birth weights at term and the risk of developing age-related vision losses."

Not only did the lab models have overall poorer vision as they aged, they specifically had poorer night vision, noted Sauvé and his colleagues. It is normal for night vision to be slightly affected with age, but night [vision loss](#) was worse as these lab models aged.

More information: The team's findings were published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Public Library of Science One* (or *PLOS One*).

Provided by University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry

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