

Poor people with diabetes may miss out on eye care

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Younger patients overlooked more often, study finds.

(HealthDay)—People with diabetes are at increased risk for eye problems, but a new study finds that poor diabetes patients who go to public hospital clinics have low rates of eye care.

Poor continuity of care can delay the detection of eye disorders and increase the risk of complications, said lead researcher Paul MacLennan, of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and colleagues.

The team looked at nearly 900 [diabetes patients](#) who were seen in a county hospital clinic. Of those patients, whose average age was 52, nearly 62 percent were women, about three-quarters were black and about 61 percent were poor.

Although doctors recommend that these patients receive annual eye exams, only about 33 percent of them had an exam within one year and 45 percent had a checkup within two years, the researchers said. Patients older than 65 were more likely to receive [eye care](#) than patients younger than 40, according to the study, which was published online Dec. 5 in the journal *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

The researchers said additional education efforts regarding the need for eye care should be directed toward younger people with diabetes.

More information: The U.S. National Eye Institute has more about [diabetic eye disease](#).

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