

# Study finds ethnic differences in effect of age-related macular degeneration on visual function

March 30 2017

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In study that included Chinese, Malay, and Indian participants, researchers found that among those with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) there were ethnic differences in visual function, such as the ability to read a newspaper or labels on medication bottles, according to a study published online by *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Understanding the link between ethnicity and health is critical to making appropriate public policy decisions. Few population-level data are available about this connection, however, including the influence of ethnicity on the association between AMD and vision-specific functioning (VSF). Ecosse L. Lamoureux, Ph.D., of the Singapore National Eye Centre, Singapore, and colleagues conducted a study that included 9,962 Chinese, Malay, and Indian adults who had eye imaging and available data from the Visual Function Index (VF-11; questionnaire designed to measure functional impairment on patients due to vision loss). Visual acuity was also measured. The researchers examined the association between AMD and VSF in the three ethnic groups. Grade of AMD was indicated as early or late.

Of the participants, 590 (5.9 percent) had early AMD and 60 (0.6 percent) had late AMD. The researchers found that both early and late AMD were associated with poorer VSF in Chinese participants, and there was a trend toward worse VSF with increasing AMD severity in Malay participants; however, there was no association between AMD

severity and VSF in Indian participants.

"Culturally sensitive interventions to improve VSF for Chinese and Malay people with AMD may be warranted. More research is needed to untangle the factors influencing the observed ethnic differences and inform communication strategies to help understand the impact of disease in different populations. Screening for early detection and management of AMD is needed to curb the progression of the disease and minimize its effect on VSF," the authors write.

**More information:** *JAMA Ophthalmol.* Published online March 30, 2017. [DOI: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2017.0026](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2017.0026)

Provided by The JAMA Network Journals

Citation: Study finds ethnic differences in effect of age-related macular degeneration on visual function (2017, March 30) retrieved 16 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-03-ethnic-differences-effect-age-related-macular.html>

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