

# A country's prevalence of visual impairment, blindness associated w level of socioeconomic develop

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In an analysis of data for 190 countries and territories, those with higher levels of socioeconomic development had a lower prevalence of visual impairment and blindness, according to a study published by *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Vision loss is the third most common impairment worldwide. Knowledge of the association between [vision loss](#) and [socioeconomic factors](#) is informative for public [health](#) planning. Mingguang He, M.B.B.S., M.D., M.Sc., M.P.H., Ph.D., of the University of Melbourne, East Melbourne, Australia, and colleagues collected data for 190 countries and territories on the prevalence of moderate to severe [visual impairment](#) (MSVI) and blindness and various social and economic factors (that determined the human development index [HDI]). Countries were divided into four levels (low, medium, high, and very high) by HDI.

The researchers found a strong negative association between prevalence rates of MSVI and blindness and socioeconomic level of development. The average prevalence of MSVI decreased from 4.38 percent in low-HDI regions to 1.51 percent in very-high-HDI regions. Higher prevalence rates were also associated with lower total health expenditure per capita, total health expenditure/gross domestic product, public/total health expenditure, and higher percentage of out-of-pocket/total [health expenditure](#).

Several limitations of the study are noted in the article.

"Socioeconomic factors should be taken into account when implementing strategies aimed at improving blindness prevention worldwide. The projected targets for VI may help to identify countries with greater needs, where the prioritization and implementation of resource-appropriate strategies is particularly important, taking into account the socioeconomic development data from other countries worldwide as reference," the authors write.

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