Racial/ethnic disparity in use of low-vision devices

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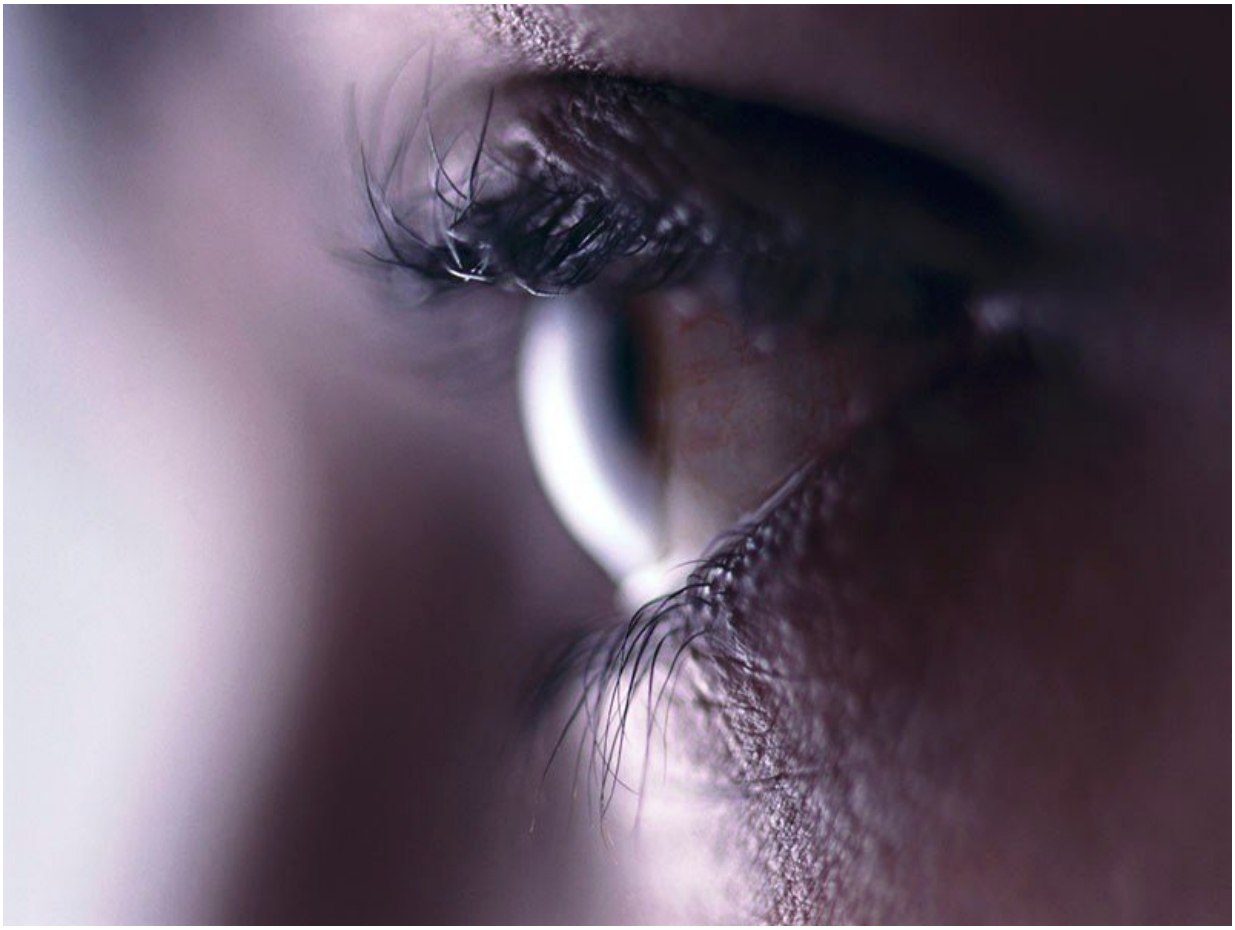

(HealthDay)—Among Medicare beneficiaries with self-reported vision

impairment, Hispanic individuals and those from other races/ethnicities are less likely to report using low-vision devices than white individuals in a model adjusted for ocular diagnoses, according to a study published online Sept. 6 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Stephanie Choi, from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional population-based survey to examine whether sociodemographic disparities exist in the use of low-vision services by Medicare beneficiaries. Data were included from the 2002, 2008, and 2016 National Health Interview Survey vision supplement for 3,058 Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 years and older with self-reported vision impairment.

The researchers found that 26.1 percent reported using low-vision devices and low-vision rehabilitation. Compared with white individuals, Hispanic individuals and those from other race/ethnicities, but not blacks, were significantly less likely to report using low-vision devices in a model adjusted for ocular diagnoses (odds ratios, 0.61 and 0.39, respectively). Black individuals were also significantly less likely to report using low-vision devices in a model that was not adjusted for ocular diagnoses (odds ratio, 0.73). No significant racial/ethnic disparities were reported for low-vision rehabilitation use.

"Policy makers could consider expanding Medicare coverage to include low-vision devices in an effort to address significant disparities in the use of this evidence-based intervention," the authors write.

More information: Abstract/Full Text