

# Unused pharmaceuticals common after cataract surgery

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(HealthDay)—Unused pharmaceutical products during

phacoemulsification result in relatively high financial and environmental costs, according to a study published online Aug. 1 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Jenna Tauber, M.D., from the New York University School of Medicine in New York City, and colleagues assessed the financial and [environmental costs](#) of unused pharmaceutical products after routine phacoemulsification surgery at four surgical sites in the northeastern United States (a private ambulatory care center, private tertiary care center, private outpatient center, and federally run medical center for veterans). The evaluation included 116 unique drugs.

The researchers found that a cumulative mean 83,070 of 183,304 mL per month (45.3 percent) of pharmaceuticals were unused by weight or volume across all sites. Cost estimates for the annual unused product reached approximately \$195,200 per site. Eye drops (65.7 percent by volume) were more often unused compared with injections (24.8 percent) or systemic medications (59.9 percent). Monthly unused quantities at the ambulatory care center (65.9 percent by volume), tertiary care center (21.3 percent), federal [medical center](#) (38.5 percent), and outpatient center (56.8 percent) resulted in unnecessary potential emissions at each location of 2,135, 2,498, 418, and 711 kg carbon dioxide equivalents per month, respectively. The investigators observed variance in unnecessary potential air pollution and unnecessary eutrophication potential between sites.

"If these findings can be substantiated and shown to be generalizable in the United States or elsewhere, reducing these costs may be of value," the authors write.

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