

Study to test 'eye retraining' treatment for sight loss caused by stroke

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Researchers at the University of Liverpool are leading a new study to test the effectiveness of a treatment for "retraining" the eyes for people who experience a loss of vision after stroke.

Funded by eye research charity Fight for Sight and the Stroke Association, the study hopes to establish a new standard of care for

stroke survivors and save the NHS money.

Hemianopia—the loss of vision or blindness in half the [visual field](#) on the right or left side—occurs suddenly in 30% of stroke survivors and can have a devastating impact on their quality of life. Currently, there is no cure and treatment to help those with hemianopia compensate for their sight loss is variable and not standardized in the NHS. This is due to uncertainty about what works best and when is the best time to offer treatment, resulting in unfair differences in the care people receive.

Visual scanning training encourages stroke survivors to scan into the "blind" side of their visual field. This can improve a stroke survivors adaptation to loss of vision. They are asked to repeatedly practice locating targets in both the seeing and blind sides of their visual field. This study, which will be run by researchers at the University of Liverpool, was designed with the help of five stroke survivors and will use paper-based visual scanning training as it is cost-effective, available to all stroke survivors and it allows them to practice training at home.

In the study, a group of 71 stroke survivors that receive eye scanning training will be compared to a group of stroke survivors that don't. They'll be followed for six months to see if the treatment can improve vision performance, and independence in everyday activities. All the information will be collected during routine eye clinic visits.

Professor Fiona Rowe from the University of Liverpool is leading the study. She said: "This study builds on an initial promising pilot trial and addresses an area of treatment for which there is limited evidence and no standard care in the NHS. Visual scanning [training](#) has the potential to benefit [stroke](#) survivors by improving their adaptation to hemianopia and it can be done at any time, any where. There is also potential for cost-savings in the NHS and social care sector through maximizing [stroke survivors'](#) use of their remaining vision, and therefore lessening its

impact on daily life activities. This treatment is a top priority highlighted by two national surveys involving large numbers of patients and carers."

The research study is due to get underway on December 1st, 2020.

Provided by University of Liverpool

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