

# Geographic variation identified in prevalence of visual acuity loss

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There is considerable variation in county-level prevalence of visual

acuity or blindness, with a positive correlation between visual acuity loss or blindness and the percentage of the population living below the poverty level, according to a research letter published online July 7 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Elizabeth A. Lundeen, Ph.D., M.P.H., from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues combined multiple data sets to produce county-level prevalence estimates for visual acuity loss or [blindness](#). The combined prevalence of visual acuity or blindness was calculated by age, sex, race, and ethnicity using data from five population-based studies.

The researchers observed considerable geographic variation in county-level prevalence of visual acuity loss or blindness. There was variation noted in the crude prevalence, from 0.75 to 13.16 percent in Douglas County, Colorado, and Kalawao County, Hawaii, respectively. The standardized prevalence varied from 0.99 to 10.88 percent in Cumberland County, Maine, and Clay County, Kentucky, respectively. There was a positive correlation between county-level standardized visual acuity loss or blindness prevalence and the percentage of the county's population living below the [poverty level](#).

"Data identifying geographic variation in the prevalence of visual acuity loss can be used to guide interventions to improve eye care services, as counties with a higher prevalence of visual acuity loss may have less access to and use of eye care services," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

**More information:** Elizabeth A. Lundeen et al, County-Level Variation in the Prevalence of Visual Acuity Loss or Blindness in the US, *JAMA Ophthalmology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2022.2405](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2022.2405)

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