

# Prevalence of uncorrected refractive error 14.6 percent in Black Americans, finds study

February 28 2024, by Elana Gotkine

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Overall, 14.6 percent of African Americans aged 40 years and older have uncorrected refractive error (UCRE), according to a [study](#) published online Feb. 22 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Nathan Dhablania, from the Southern California Eye Institute in Los

Angeles, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the burden of and [risk factors](#) associated with any UCRE and unmet refractive need (URN) in a population-based sample of self-identified African American participants aged 40 years or older.

Participants underwent a complete ophthalmic examination and an in-home administered questionnaire; 6,347 participants completed both, and 6,337 with complete refractive error data were included in the analysis.

The researchers found that 68.7 percent of participants had refractive error-related correctable visual impairment. The overall prevalence was 14.6 and 5.4 percent for any UCRE and any URN, respectively.

"Uncorrected refractive errors remain a significant cause of visual disability," Brian L. VanderBeek, M.D., M.P.H., from the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine in Philadelphia, writes in an accompanying editorial.

"Policymakers should take steps to protect vulnerable populations who are impacted by this issue, including creating policies that would mandate vision insurance coverage."

**More information:** Nathan Dhablania et al, Uncorrected Refractive Error in the African American Eye Disease Study, *JAMA Ophthalmology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2023.6781](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2023.6781)

Brian L. VanderBeek, Toward Eliminating Visual Impairment Due to Refractive Error, *JAMA Ophthalmology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2024.0003](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2024.0003)

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