

Genes, diet, exercise predict risk of vision loss in older women

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Researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison published the results of an observational study of women with a genetic predisposition for age-related macular degeneration in the journal [Ophthalmology](#). The study revealed that the odds of developing the blinding eye disorder significantly increases if a person has a history of heavy smoking and consistently did not exercise or eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD), when the central portion of the retina deteriorates, is a leading cause of vision loss among people age 50 and older. Previous studies have shown that eating a healthy diet and getting exercise protect against developing the disease. The recent study suggests that genetic and lifestyle factors may contribute to AMD in a synergistic way, when different factors work together to enhance or lower risk.

Collaborating with researchers from the University of Iowa, Iowa City and Oregon Health Science University, 1,663 women ages 50 to 79 years had their diet and exercise patterns evaluated and were then categorized into risk groups.

Of those women studied, 337 developed AMD, 91 percent of whom had early-stage disease. Those who carried two high-risk genetic alleles, smoked at least one pack per day for at least seven years, and were in the highest-risk diet and exercise categories were more than four times more likely to have AMD compared to women who did not have genetic risk factors, ate a healthy diet, and got 10 hours/week of light exercise or eight hours of moderate activity.

Read full, original post: [Studies Confirm Interaction of Genetics, Diet, Exercise Affect Age-Related Macular Degeneration Risk](#)