

Cataract surgery in older women associated with decreased risk of death

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In older women with cataracts in the Women's Health Initiative, cataract surgery was associated with a lower risk for overall and cause-specific death, although whether this association is explained by the intervention of cataract surgery is unclear, according to a study published by *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Previous studies have suggested an association between [cataract surgery](#) and decreased risk for all-cause mortality potentially through a mechanism of improved health status and functional independence, but the association between cataract surgery and cause-specific mortality has not been previously studied and is not well understood.

Anne L. Coleman, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of California, Los Angeles, and colleagues conducted a study that included nationwide data collected from the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) clinical trial and observational study linked with the Medicare claims database.

Participants in the present study were 65 years or older with a diagnosis of cataracts in the linked Medicare claims database. The WHI data were collected from January 1993 through December 2015. The WHI is a study of U.S. postmenopausal women ages 50 to 79 years; the database contains information on total and cause-specific mortality.

A total of 74,044 women with cataracts in the WHI included 41,735 who underwent cataract surgery; average age was 71 years. The researchers found that cataract surgery was associated with a 60 percent reduced risk of death from all causes; and a 37 percent to 69 percent reduced risk of

death due to pulmonary, accidental, infectious, neurologic and vascular diseases, and cancer.

The study notes some limitations, including that because the WHI cohort is all female, findings from this study may not be generalizable to male patients.

"Further study of the interplay of [cataract surgery](#), systemic disease, and disease-related [mortality](#) would be informative for improved patient care," the authors write.

More information: *JAMA Ophthalmology* (2017).
[jamanetwork.com/journals/jamao ... ophthalmol.2017.4512](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamao...ophthalmol.2017.4512)

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