

Vision impairment is associated with mortality

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The global population is aging, and so are their eyes. In fact, the number of people with vision impairment and blindness is expected to more than double over the next 30 years.

A meta-analysis in *The Lancet Global Health*, consisting of 48,000

people from 17 studies, found that those with more severe vision impairment had a higher risk of all-cause mortality compared to those that had normal vision or mild vision impairment.

According to the data, the risk of mortality was 29% higher for participants with mild vision impairment, compared to normal vision. The risk increases to 89% among those with severe vision impairment.

Importantly, four of five cases of [vision impairment](#) can be prevented or corrected. Globally, the leading causes of vision loss and blindness are both avoidable: cataract and the unmet need for glasses.

The study's lead author, Joshua Ehrlich, M.D., M.P.H., sought to better understand the association between visual disabilities and all-cause [mortality](#).

The work compliments some of Ehrlich's recent research, also in The Lancet Global Health Commission on Global Eye Health, that highlighted the [impact of late-life vision impairment on health and well-being](#), including its influence on dementia, depression, and loss of independence.

"It's important these issues are addressed early on because losing your vision affects more than just how you see the world; it affects your experience of the world and your life," says Ehrlich. "This analysis provides an important opportunity to promote not only health and wellbeing, but also longevity by correcting, rehabilitating, and preventing avoidable [vision](#) loss across the globe."

More information: Joshua R Ehrlich et al, Association between vision impairment and mortality: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *The Lancet Global Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30549-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30549-0)

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