



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

GLAUCOMA & FAMILY HISTORY

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in America. While glaucoma can be successfully treated it is best to detect it early. What most people do not know is that it is an inheritable disease. Elevated Intraocular Pressure, Age and Race are also risk factors for developing glaucoma.

In the September issue of the Journal of Glaucoma the Glaucoma Department at Johns Hopkins University report on a study on patients and their families. The article is entitled: Targeting Relatives of Patients with Primary Open Angle Glaucoma: The Help the Family Glaucoma Project. The purpose of the study was to test the knowledge of patients with glaucoma and their family members about the risk factors of glaucoma. They also wanted to know how often patients with glaucoma referred their family members for glaucoma screening.

85% of patients and family members knew that Glaucoma is more common in older age groups. Most of the patients (95%) knew that glaucoma is associated with higher intraocular pressures while 78% of the family members were aware of this. **Yet 21% of both groups did not know that open angle glaucoma is hereditary. One half of the patients and less than a third of the family members knew that glaucoma is more common in certain ethnic groups (African Americans for example).** A significant number of family members did not have a recent eye exam.

If you have glaucoma tell your family members to get an eye examination. If your relative has glaucoma consider an eye examination for yourself. **Early detection can help save your vision.**

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