



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

Glaucoma - Can Taking Glaucoma Medicines Reduce Your Chances of Dying?

“For patients diagnosed with glaucoma, taking medications for the condition appears to improve survival, researchers found” according to Medpage Today.

Joshua Goldstein, MD reports in *The Archives of Ophthalmology* which showed that “patients with suspected glaucoma or confirmed glaucoma were 74% less likely to die during a five year period if they were prescribed any glaucoma medication. The study was based on 21,506 patients 40 years or older.

The medications, usually beta blockers like Timoptic and prostaglandin analogues like Xalatan, Travatan, and Lumigan but this applies to all glaucoma medicines. They further showed that an increase in the number of different medicines further improves survival.

It is not clear why these medications should have such a good effect; they are absorbed into the blood stream and could affect “blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and kidney function” according to Dr. Goldstein.

There are significant limitations to the study and the authors emphasize “that they could not prove a causal relationship between the use of glaucoma medication and lower risk of dying during the study period” (Medpage Today). Nonetheless, this information should at least make taking the eye drops needed to treat glaucoma a whole lot better. Not only will they stop the the damage of glaucoma to your vision but it may turn out to have a bonus beneficial effect on your life.

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