

FOCUS - Falls risk in cataract– a longitudinal evaluation of impact and risk

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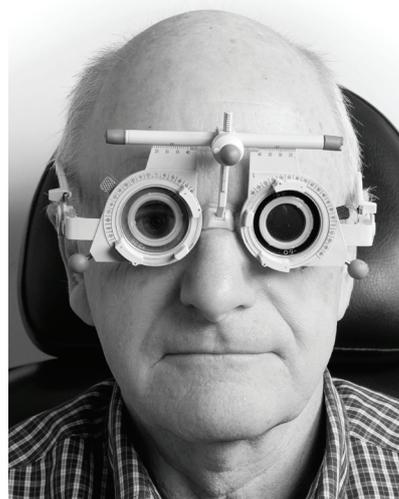
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Facts

- Falls are a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Australia, with at least 30% of persons aged over 65 years falling each year.
- Cataracts are a major cause of vision impairment and more common in the older population.
- Cataracts increases a person's risk of falling by approximately three times.
- Falls in Australia cost more than \$1 billion in medical treatment, disability, lost output and mortality each year.

Supporters:

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)



Contact

To find out more about FOCUS - Falls risk in cataract study and its principal investigator Dr Lisa Keay or The George Institute for Global Health, please contact:

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Background:

- There is strong evidence of an increased falls risk associated with cataract, a primary cause of vision impairment in older Australians.
- While surgical treatment for cataract is highly successful, recent research has found that the risk of falls in bilateral cataract patients actually increases in the period following surgery.

Aims:

- FOCUS will measure changes over time in the rate of falls and falls requiring medical care while people wait for first and second eye cataract surgery; characterise the visual function in older people in these time periods and review vision linkages to increased falls risk.
- To assess changes to quality of life, community participation, independent mobility, driving confidence, physical activity and depression after cataract surgery.
- To characterise the healthcare utilisation of a cohort of older people with cataract before and after cataract surgery.

Methods:

- FOCUS is a collaborative study involving eight public hospital eye clinics across New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. The study will include over 700 participants with bilateral cataract and will track each participant for up to a two-year period.

Impact:

- The findings from FOCUS can inform the optimal management of older people with cataract, and limit the negative health impacts of cataract including vulnerability to falls and fall-related injury, visual impairment, restricted socialisation and depression.

Partners:

Westmead Hospital; Sydney Eye Hospital; Royal North Shore Hospital; Fremantle Hospital; Royal Perth Hospital; Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital; Survey Research Centre, Edith Cowan University; Save Sight Institute, University of Sydney; School of Optometry & Vision Science, UNSW; Curtin Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC), Curtin University; Centre for Eye Research Australia, University of Melbourne; Dept. of Optometry and Vision Science, Flinders University; Eye and Vision Epidemiology Research Group, The University of Western Australia