



COFFEE AND VISION LOSS LINKED

Easing up on java consumption or switching to decaf may be a wise move for coffee lovers, according to a scientific paper published in *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*. The study links heavy consumption of the caffeinated beverage to an increased risk of developing exfoliation glaucoma, a condition in which fluid builds up inside the eye and puts pressure on the optic nerve. This leads to some vision loss and in serious cases, total blindness.

Researchers obtained data from 78,977 women from the Nurses' Health Study and 41,202 men from the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study that focused on caffeinated coffee, tea and cola servings. They found that drinking three or more cups of caffeinated coffee daily was linked with an increased risk of developing the eye condition, especially for women with a family history of glaucoma. However, the researchers did not find associations with consumption of decaffeinated tea, chocolate or coffee.

"Because this is the first [such] study, confirmation of the U.S. results in other populations would be needed to lend more credence to the possibility that caffeinated coffee might be a modifiable risk factor for glaucoma," says Doctor of Science Jae Hee Kang, of the Channing Division of Network Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston, Massachusetts. "It may also lead to research into other dietary or lifestyle risk factors."