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Macular Degeneration and Heart Disease

Researchers at the University of Sydney have conducted a study which suggests that the risk of dying from cardiovascular conditions is at least doubled in people with AMD.

The study was conducted over a period of more than a decade. It tracked people in NSW aged 49 years or more and found that those who developed early stages of MD had twice the risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke over that period.

Professor Paul Mitchell from the Centre for Vision Research led the study and said that the scientists do not yet fully understand the link between the conditions but that it could, in part, be explained by shared risk factors such as smoking and high blood pressure.

“There might also be a genetic link, because both AMD and cardiovascular disease have genes that are important in determining who will develop them,” said Professor Mitchell. “Eye doctors and GPs should be aware of this potential link and take care to check eye patients for risk factors associated with vascular disease.”

However, researchers did admit that more work was needed to confirm the study, as the number of participants was relatively small.