

Macular Degeneration (MD) Study, prepared by Galaxy Research for the MD Foundation

Male or female, Victoria or Queensland, everyone sees blindness differently

Men vs Women

- While 41 per cent of men claim to have heard of MD, only 28 per cent are aware the disease affects the eyes.
- Around half of all women (51 per cent) have heard of MD, however most (59 per cent) do not know what part of the body the disease affects.
- Only 28 per cent of men are aware that MD affects the eyes compared to 41 per cent of women.
- Almost half of all men (45 per cent) accept severe vision loss or blindness as a part of getting older.
- Approximately two thirds (64 per cent) of female workers believe they would not be able to continue working if they developed severe vision loss or blindness compared to 56 per cent of male workers.
- Most people (95 per cent) believe they would need to modify or discontinue their day to day activities such as driving or reading a book if affected by severe vision loss or blindness.
- Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of all women aware of MD rate the health of their macula as 'good' or 'excellent'. Men aware of MD are less confident in the health of their macula with 59% rating it 'good' or 'excellent'.
- Only one in four (26 per cent) of women and 15% of men have had their macula tested by an optometrist or ophthalmologist in the last two years.
- One in three (32 per cent) men and 35 per cent of women expect difficulties with their vision would begin at age 60 or older despite MD being the leading cause of blindness in Australia, with those in the over 50s age group most at risk.
- 78 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men believe they would be more likely to feel depressed if affected by severe vision loss or blindness.

State vs State

- State breakdown of residents who believe they would not be able to work at all or would need to modify their role at work if affected by severe vision loss or blindness:
 - Western Australia – 86 per cent;
 - Victoria and Tasmania - 81 per cent;
 - New South Wales - 84 per cent;
 - South Australia - 85 per cent;
 - Queensland - 86 per cent.
- Compared to other states, West Australians are the least likely to have heard of MD (61 per cent) despite it being the leading cause of blindness in Australia. They are also the least likely to realise the condition affects the eyes (27 per cent).

Fact Sheet – Research

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- 97 per cent of West Australians believe they would not be able to continue with day to day activities such as reading or driving if affected by severe vision loss or blindness.
- 59 per cent of people living in Victoria or Tasmania believe they would rely on a health or welfare agency for support if they were diagnosed with MD compared to only 37 per cent of Queenslanders.
- NSW residents are most likely to rate the health of their macula as 'good' or 'excellent' (72 per cent).
- West Australians are the least likely to believe they have had their macula checked in the last two years (13 per cent), followed by South Australians (16 per cent).
- Queenslanders and West Australians are most likely to believe difficulties with vision begin in their forties (30 per cent in each state) compared to those people living in other states.
- People living in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania are most likely to think they would feel depressed as a result of severe vision loss (80 per cent in each state) compared to people living in other states.
- People living in Victoria and Tasmania are most likely (41 per cent) to believe that severe vision loss or blindness are just a part of getting older compared to people living in other states.

Healthcare Professionals

- 67 per cent of Australians claim their macula is in 'excellent' or 'good' health
- Of the 21% of the population that claim to have had their macula tested in the last 2 years:
 - Most people visited an optometrist (72 per cent);
 - One quarter visited an ophthalmologist (25 per cent) and;
- 79 per cent of Australians guess the health of their macula or are unsure of its condition.
- The only way to know the health of your macula is to visit an eye-health professional.

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