

Study: Aspirin prophylaxis has no effect on AMD development

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Prophylactic aspirin therapy appears to have no effect on development of new-onset age-related macular degeneration.

According to results from the Women's Health Study, which investigated whether low-dose aspirin therapy and vitamin E could prevent cardiovascular disease and cancer among 39,876 women in a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, there was no difference in incident AMD in patients taking aspirin or placebo.

The potential for aspirin to lower AMD risk comes from epidemiologic studies that suggest that the ocular pathology and cardiovascular disease share common risk factors. However, after 10 years of treatment and follow-up, 111 cases of visually significant AMD were noted in the treatment group compared with 134 cases in the placebo group.

While patients on aspirin had an 18% lower risk of developing visually significant AMD, the difference was not statistically significant. There was also a 10% reduced risk of advanced AMD at 10 years among patients in the aspirin group, but again the result did not reach statistical significance.

However, the study authors noted, the effect of aspirin may have been modified by the use of multivitamins by study participants: "Among current nonusers of multivitamins, those in the aspirin group had a statistically significant 32% reduced risk of AMD ... whereas among current users of multivitamins, there was a nonsignificant 14% increased risk of AMD in the aspirin group."