

Retinal Detachment Surgery Outcomes Worse in Latinos

Retinal detachment can result in permanent vision loss and requires immediate surgery.

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Latino and Black patients had worse vision after undergoing surgery for retinal detachment compared with white patients, according to a study from Boston Medical Center (BMC), a safety-net hospital.

Retinal detachment is an emergency, sight-threatening situation in which tissue at the back of the [eye](#) pulls away from its normal position. It requires immediate surgery and can result in permanent [vision loss](#) in the affected eye if left untreated.

Published in the [Canadian Journal of Ophthalmology](#), the study found that while all patients had similar single surgery success rates, minority patients experienced significantly worse vision post-surgery and were more likely to have multiple retinal breaks, which can lead to retinal detachment. Higher rates of retinal scarring among minority patients might have contributed to these study results, according to a [BMC news release](#).

Researchers noted that many previous studies that yielded similar findings were completed outside the United States, where lack of access to medical care can influence outcomes. This study, conducted at a safety-net hospital (meaning patients are not turned away for lack of insurance or inability to pay), revealed that race and ethnicity impact the presentation of retinal detachment and the outcome of surgery to repair it.

Researchers examined the health records of 124 Latino and Black patients and 71 white patients who underwent surgery for retinal detachment at BMC and compared patients' demographics, preoperative characteristics and surgical outcomes.

"An understanding of patient and group-specific risk factors can help surgeons better choose the appropriate procedure to best achieve their goals of vision preservation and restoration," said Steven Ness, MD, the study's lead author and an ophthalmology specialist at BMC.
