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Visual impairment ↑ with age

2010 US Prevalence Estimates

Visual Impairment is ↑

Aging: Looking at the whole picture
Did we lose sight of context?

Keith Haring

“Statistical Analysis of Keith Haring”
Ursus Wehrli
Vision-Cognition Relationship
Eyes collect information, but “seeing” occurs in the brain.
Adapted from F. Lin
Dementia is an umbrella term

Dementia is a general term for cognitive decline that interferes with daily activities.
Cognitive impairment is a spectrum

Cognitive impairment ranges from mild cognitive impairment (MCI) to dementia

ADRD is $$ and prevalence is ↑

$290 billion: U.S. cost of ADRD in 2019

5.8 million Americans have ADRD in 2019, which will increase to 14 million by 2050.

Older adults with visual impairments:

↑ risk of Dementia & Cognitive decline

A bidirectional relationship:

• Worse vision associated with worse cognition
• BUT... Worsening vision has stronger association with cognitive ↓
Older adults with vision loss are more likely to report memory complaints.

American Geriatrics Society and National Institute on Aging Bench-to-Bedside Conference: Sensory Impairment and Cognitive Decline in Older Adults

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Mechanisms ➔ Interventions

- Vision Impairment
- Eye Disease
- Cognitive Load
  - Brain Structure/Function
- Social Isolation
- Psychological Wellbeing
- Reduced Activity
- Common Etiology
- Impaired Cognition

Mechanisms → Interventions

Common “Cause” Pathway

Mechanisms → Interventions

Vision Impairment
Eye Disease

Common Etiology
- Cognitive Load
- Brain Structure/Function
- Social Isolation
- Psychological Wellbeing
- Reduced Activity

Impaired Cognition

Vision Loss
Consequence
Pathway

Vision & eye health are critical components of the aging picture.
Focus on Eye Health
National Summit
A Lifetime of Vision
July 17, 2019  |  National Press Club  |  Washington D.C.
Prevent Blindness
Bringing Americans to Eye Care