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UW Health

DEPARTMENT OF
Ophthalmology
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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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Making a Difference

Participating in a High Myopia Genetic Research Study

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What is myopia?

Myopia (nearsightedness) is the most common eye condition in the world. It affects one in four people. Individuals with myopia have trouble seeing far away without wearing glasses or contact lenses. Individuals with higher degrees of myopia are at risk for developing more severe vision problems, such as retinal detachment, central retinal bleeding, premature cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Why study families?

High myopia tends to be inherited in families. It is important to identify the genes that cause high myopia in order to develop therapies to prevent the long-term complications listed above. To find these genes, it is necessary to also include family members without high myopia.

You may be eligible for this research study if you:

- Had onset of myopia at 12 years of age or younger
- Have an eyeglass prescription of about -5 diopters or more as an adult
- Have one or more family members with high myopia

What have we learned?

Our researchers have mapped and identified multiple genes for myopia, as well as other hereditary eye diseases. We have clarified the relationship of the MYP1 gene to color blindness and have found new genes that may affect eye development and progressive myopia. We are developing animal models of these findings in order to study changes in a living system that may eventually help humans.

Our research efforts are funded by the National Eye Institute/National Institutes of Health, Macula Vision Research Foundation, Research to Prevent Blindness, Inc. and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The research study requires you to:

- Complete a short questionnaire, either in person or over the phone
- Provide a sample of DNA, either from a small blood or saliva sample

Qualified participants receive:

- A free eye examination

Terri L. Young, MD, MBA
Professor and Chair

Terri Young, MD, MBA, is the Peter A. Duehr Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

An internationally renowned physician-scientist, Dr. Young joined the Department in 2014. She was professor of ophthalmology, pediatrics and medicine at Duke University and founding director of the Duke Eye Center Ophthalmic Genetics Clinic and Research Program. She also held the titles of adjunct Professor of Neuroscience and Behavioral Disorders at the Duke-National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School.

With more than 185 published peer-reviewed papers, Dr. Young has built an impressive record of competitive grant funding as an investigator. Her research specializes in genetic studies of refractive errors, eye development and growth, primary congenital glaucoma and other inherited ocular disorders.

Contact us today

If you are interested in joining the study, please contact study coordinator Angie Wealti, BS, CCRC, at wealti@ophth.wisc.edu or (608) 265-7557.