

Australian researchers develop technique to detect glaucoma earlier

Researchers at the University of New South Wales (UNSW, Australia) have developed a testing protocol that identifies glaucoma 4 years earlier than current techniques, the university said in a press release. The patented method involves patients looking at small dots of light of specially chosen size and light intensity. An inability to see them indicates blind spots in the eye and early loss of peripheral vision. The UNSW innovation involves an automated visual field analysis system that uses a pattern of differently sized spots, which seems to be more sensitive at detecting disease at earlier stages, the university said. Current visual field testing systems use just 1 test size to measure vision at different locations of the visual field, the university said. When the UNSW approach was used to assess 13 patients with early glaucoma or optic nerve damage and 42 people without eye disease, greater vision loss was detected in all patients than using the standard test. An additional 30 patients will undergo testing at UNSW's Centre for Eye Health.