

STUDY FINDS LINK TO SERIOUS EYE DISEASE

A genetic eye disease research project led by Australian researchers – the largest analysis to date combining data from 20,000 people in Australia, Europe, North America and Asia – has identified a family of genes related to collagen that influence corneal thickness and disease risk.

Lions Eye Institute’s Managing Director Professor David Mackey said the finding was significant because a thick cornea was one of the risk factors for keratoconus as well as glaucoma, the second leading cause of blindness.

“Keratoconus is a leading cause of severe visual impairment in young adults and the main indication for corneal transplant in most developed countries, including Australia,” Professor Mackey said.

“A combination of these gene variants can result in a person having a thinner cornea and much greater risk of developing eye diseases.”

“These findings allow researchers to now target specific gene pathways involving collagen to help prevent and treat keratoconus and glaucoma.”

The study was published in the international journal *Nature Genetics*.

<http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/v45/n2/full/ng.2506.html>

Keratoconus

