

Participant Information Statement



Research Study:

Don't Blink or You'll Miss It: Exploring Barriers and Novel Solutions to Diabetic Retinopathy Screening in Primary Care

A/Prof Andrew White

Head of Ophthalmology, Westmead Hospital | Email: andrew.white@sydney.edu.au

1. What is this study about?

We are conducting a research study about **General Practitioners' (GPs) current practices, and perspectives on barriers and novel solutions to diabetic retinopathy screening in the primary care**. Taking part in this study is entirely anonymous and voluntary.

Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

2. Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- **Dr Helen Zhang** BMed/MD (Dist.), DipOphthSci, Masters Student in the School of Medicine, The University of Sydney
- **Dr Jessie Huang-Lung** BOptom (Hons), GradCertOcTher, PhD, School of Optometry and Vision Science, The University of New South Wales
- **Dr Stephanie Hyams** BMedSc(Hons), MBBS(Hons), FACAM, FRACGP
- **A/Prof Andrew White** BMedSci(Hons), MBBS, PhD, FRANZCO, Head of Ophthalmology at Westmead Hospital, The University of Sydney

Dr Helen Zhang is conducting this study as her thesis for the degree of Masters of Medicine (Ophthalmic Sciences) at The University of Sydney.

This study not being funded by any funding body or organisation. There are no conflicts of interest to disclose. No financial benefits to the researchers or affiliated institutions will arise from this research.

3. Who can take part in the study?

We are seeking Australian GPs and GP registrars currently working in an Australian practice for inclusion this study.

You have been invited to take part in this study because you have been identified as being a GP or GP registrar working in an Australian clinic, and will have valuable insights and perspectives about current screening practices for diabetic retinopathy in general practice.

4. What will the study involve for me?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete the following survey about your perspectives about diabetic retinopathy screening in primary care. This survey should take around 3 minutes to complete, and is completely anonymous. It includes mostly multiple choice questions categorised into the following sections:

- Basic demographic information
- Current diabetic retinopathy screening practices
- Cycle of care
- Barriers to diabetic retinopathy screening
- Preferred screening practices

As we are not collecting any identifiable data, consent to partake in this study will be implied through the return of a completed survey, either online or in hardcopy format. Hardcopy surveys can be obtained through contacted Dr Helen Zhang at hzha3000@uni.sydney.edu.au.

5. Can I withdraw once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at The University of Sydney.

By submitting your survey, you consent to take part in the study. You can withdraw any time before you submit however once your responses are submitted, they cannot be withdrawn. This is because they are anonymous, and we will not be able to tell which one yours is.

6. Are there any risks or costs?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

7. Are there any benefits?

While you may not immediately receive any direct benefits from being in the study, we hope that this study will assist us in identifying and overcoming barriers to effective primary care screening of diabetic retinopathy for Australian patients. This knowledge will help us to design, create and advocate for improved systems of screening, and thereby potentially also funding for GPs to undertake diabetic retinopathy screening, to ultimately have an overall benefit for our society by reducing the burden of preventable blindness.

8. What will happen to information that is collected?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting information about you for the purposes of this study.

Any information you provide us will be privately and securely stored on the University of Sydney's REDCap database, and only researchers directly involved in this research project will have access to the information. Information from hardcopy surveys will be directly transcribed onto REDCap, with the original copy shredded. We are not collecting identifiable information in this study, and will not be disclosing findings to third parties, unless we are required by law to release information. As the data is deidentified, it may

be exported from REDCap to the University of Sydney's Research Data Store and kept for an indefinite period of time.

We are planning for the study findings to be included in a Masters-level thesis, and ultimately also published in a medical journal, and/or presented at medical conferences. You will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

9. Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. As we will not be collecting personal identifiers as part of this study, we will not be providing personalised or direct results to participants. However, if you would like to have access to the thesis paper or any publications which may result from data collected in this study, you are welcome to email Helen at hzha3000@uni.sydney.edu.au to request that it be sent to you when completed or published.

10. I know of Australian GPs/ GP networks who may be interested in participating in this study. How can I forward them this survey?

Thank you for considering helping to broaden our study and expand this investigation on ways to improve diabetic retinopathy screening! You can contact Dr Helen Zhang at hzha3000@uni.sydney.edu.au for further information and gain access to online or hardcopy versions of any of the study documents, including the study survey, Participant Information Sheet and Study Advertisement which can be forwarded to potential participants.

11. What if I would like further information?

When you have read this information, feel free to contact Dr Helen Zhang (contact email listed above) if you have any further questions, concerns or enquiries.

12. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney [Reference, 2023/369] according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the University:

Human Ethics Manager
human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
+61 2 8627 8176

***This information sheet is for you to keep.
Thank you for considering taking part in our study.***