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Researcher proposes glaucoma screening in China to reduce blindness

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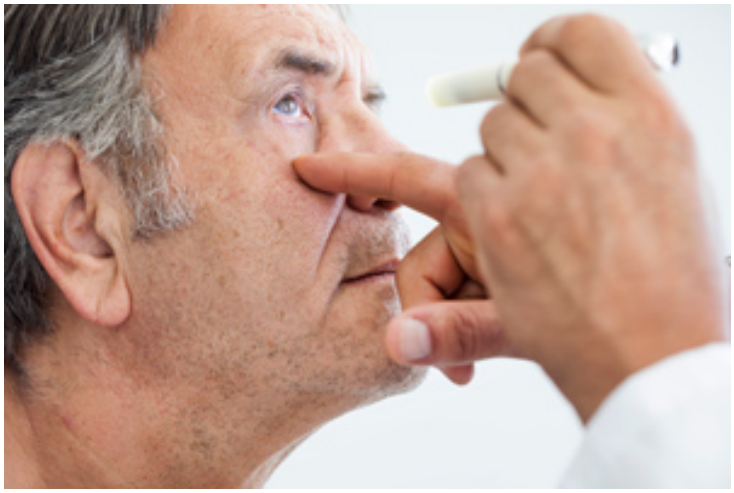

New research by Queen's University Belfast has found that offering glaucoma screening in China could be highly cost-effective while reducing blindness among the population. The novel findings could change the future of glaucoma healthcare in the world's most largely populated country.

The researchers revealed how a national screening could save government funds in the long-term as well as saving three million years of blindness among the over 50 population.

Dr Jianjun Tang from the Centre of Public Health at Queen's University Belfast, explains: "The research findings suggest that a national glaucoma screening programme in China could save the government money in the long-term, as it would reduce the demands on resources for the large population who would otherwise suffer completely avoidable loss of sight."

Given the disproportionate number of people affected by glaucoma in China - one third of those with glaucoma blindness worldwide - researchers at Queen's University Belfast set out to assess the cost-effectiveness of glaucoma screening programmes there.

The study found that nearly three million years of blindness could be avoided across China's population of 434 million people aged 50 and over through the implementation of a screening programme in both rural and urban settings. The research also highlighted the improved quality of life expected among those who received an early diagnosis.

Dr Tang added: "Our research illustrates that a national screening programme in China is a win-win scenario for both patients and the government, and we hope that this research will inform future healthcare policies."

This novel study, with its unexpected result, is a potential game-changer for management of glaucoma in low-resource areas globally.

The research was a collaboration between Queen's University Belfast, Wenzhou Medical University, Renmin University of

China and Orbis International.