



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

October 2021 CCSS: Promising Practices in Military Health Care S04: Enhancing Readiness: Refractive Surgery in the Military

Resource List

The article, [Military Members Turn to Refractive Surgery to Improve Readiness](#) (2016), provides a better insight of the importance of refractive surgery, especially to active military service members. While civilians may undergo refractive surgery for lifestyle reasons, such as cosmetic purposes, the military have a more focused and crucial reason to undergo refractive surgery. This procedure is critical to the operational safety and all the work they do to improve the readiness of the service members. The article also presents the many benefits of the different refractive surgery procedures.

The Laser Eye Center at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center published the article, [Laser eye surgery: Provides clarity for active duty service members](#) (2021), that highlights the Center's role in supporting the active duty service members to ensure military readiness, including career advancements to leadership roles. With the introduction and continual improvement of corneal refractive surgery technology, a third of the USNA third-year class comes to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland to have their laser eye surgery. Also, laser eye surgery is becoming an increasingly popular treatment method for Airmen, as they are fully covered provided they meet procedure requirements. Refractive surgery on active duty service members is a readiness issue, as the procedure helps service members be less dependent on glasses or contacts in a deployed environment.

Refractive surgery is being performed for more than 30 years and are known to be very safe and highly effective. Yet, there are still many concerns regarding their safety and efficacy. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the [Predictive factors for safety and efficacy in laser refractive surgery for myopia](#) (2018). The study concluded that efficacy in refractive surgery for myopia is correlated with younger age, male gender and low myopia, while safety is correlated with younger age, low myopia and increases over the years. However, further studies are needed to improve our understanding of the predictive factors for success in refractive surgeries for longer follow up periods, using our new method to predict safety and efficacy.

[Eye Care Among US Adults at High Risk for Vision Loss in the United States in 2002 and 2017](#) (2020) compared data from 2002 and 2017 by the National Health Interview Survey, an annual, cross-sectional, nationally representative sample of US noninstitutionalized civilians. The purpose of the study was to estimate the number of US adults 18 years or older at high risk for vision loss in 2017 and to evaluate use of eye care services in 2017 compared with 2002. Compared with data from 2002, more US adults were at high risk for vision loss in 2017. Although more adults used eye care, a larger proportion reported eyeglasses as unaffordable. Focusing resources on populations at high risk for vision loss, increasing awareness of the importance of eye care, and making eyeglasses more affordable could promote eye health, preserve vision, and reduce disparities.



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