

Dr. Rohit Varma of CHA HPMC’s Southern California Eye Institute Publishes Study Examining Prevalence and Treatment of Primary Angle Closure Disease in Chinese Americans

SCEI Founding Director Advances Understanding of 2nd Most Common Glaucoma

LOS ANGELES, CA – April 1, 2025 - [CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center](#) (CHA HPMC), a member of CHA Health Systems, a global network providing a full spectrum of dynamic healthcare services, is proud to announce the Founding Director of its state-of-the-art eye institute, [Southern California Eye Institute](#), Dr. Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, has published a new study in *The American Journal of Ophthalmology*, a prominent peer-reviewed ophthalmology journal.

Dr. Varma and colleagues examined the burden of a common type of glaucoma (angle closure glaucoma) and related conditions among Chinese Americans. Angle closure glaucoma is a form of glaucoma where the iris (the colored part of the eye) blocks the eye fluid from draining normally. As a result, pressure in the eye (intraocular pressure or IOP) rises, which can harm the optic nerve and lead to vision loss and blindness.

“Angle closure glaucoma particularly the acute form is very dangerous when left untreated. The disease can cause severe eye pain, blurring of vision due to high eye pressure and if left untreated can cause irreversible vision loss and blindness,” said Dr. Varma.

Historically, angle closure glaucoma is more common in persons of East Asian ancestry but little is known about the burden of this condition in east Asians in the US. Dr. Varma and his team drew on data from the Chinese American Eye Study—the largest-ever eye study of Americans with Chinese ancestry—in which they carefully examined 4,582 self-identified Chinese Americans aged 50 or older.

Their study concluded that the frequency of Angle closure glaucoma and related conditions among Chinese Americans does not significantly differ than that found in mainland Chinese. Persons who were at higher risk of having Angle closure glaucoma and the related conditions had higher eye pressure, older age, family history of glaucoma and smaller sized eyes. The most important finding of the study was that 75% of all persons with angle closure glaucoma were previously undetected and undiagnosed. This highlights the need for increased awareness and screening efforts for PACD, particularly in those persons who are at high risk for developing angle closure glaucoma. Such screening and early detection can reduce vision loss in these high risk populations and prevent permanent vision from angle closure glaucoma.

“This research enhances our understanding of the need for early diagnosis and treatment of this important type of glaucoma in Chinese Americans. Improved early detection and intervention can help reduce the burden of vision loss from this blinding eye disease,” said Dr. Varma.

About CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center

[CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center](#) (CHA HPMC) is a nationally recognized acute care facility that has cared for Hollywood and its surrounding communities since 1924. Today, CHA HPMC offers comprehensive health care services with a 434-bed acute care facility, including 89 skilled nursing beds. The hospital has a medical staff of more than 550 physicians and specialists, representing 69 specialties and 75 different countries. CHA HPMC embraces the area’s diverse, multicultural patient populations by providing all who walk through its doors quality care in a compassionate manner. It is a member of CHA Health Systems, a dynamic global healthcare organization that provides a full spectrum of services in seven countries around the world, including 91 hospitals and clinics, 30 research and 14 education institutions

and 31 bio/pharmaceutical/healthcare companies. For more information about CHA HPMC, visit <http://www.hollywoodpresbyterian.com>.

About Southern California Eye Institute

[Southern California Eye Institute](#) is dedicated to providing the highest level of vision care, using the latest technology and treatments to deliver the best outcome to patients in Los Angeles and from around the world. The institute's expert physician-scientists are advancing innovations in stem cell and regenerative therapies, artificial intelligence and bioelectronic implants to further the prevention, early detection and treatment of eye diseases and conditions. Founded by world-renowned ophthalmologist Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, SCEI is located in Los Angeles at CHA Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center. For more information, visit www.sceyes.org.

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