



The eye drops focus on preventing diabetic retinopathy, an eye disease affecting the retina | Photo source Vanessa Bumbeers on Unsplash

EYE DROPS THAT STOP RETINAL DAMAGE



HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING

The eye drops would be a less invasive way for diabetics to prevent eye disease

Spotted: Researchers at Brazil's Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) have developed eye drops with the potential to prevent eye disease. The eye drops could help diabetics stop vision loss due to blood vessel damage, according to the scientists.

The eye drops focus on preventing diabetic retinopathy, which is an eye disease that affects the retina. Diabetics frequently suffer from damaged blood vessels due high blood sugar levels. When that affects the retina, it can cause blurred vision and other problems.

While there are treatments available, they are invasive (think surgery and injections). The eye drops would potentially offer an easier solution.

Researcher and ophthalmologist Jacqueline Mendonca Lopes de Faria said the eye drops are the result of two decades of research. Lopes de Faria said the eye drops have already been tested on "diabetic animals" with good results. Now the team is looking for resources to continue tests in Brazil and abroad.

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Takeaway:

The number of diabetics worldwide has increased from 108 million in 1980 to 422 million in 2014, according to the World Health Organisation. The rate of people diagnosed with diabetes has gone from 4.7 percent to 8.5 percent for those over 18 in the same period. Diabetic retinopathy, if left untreated, can cause blindness. People with type 1 or type 2 diabetes face a particular risk. These eye drops could provide a more accessible way to care for the disease – and even prevent it. Springwise has recently spotted other innovations to help diabetics, including smart socks to prevent hospitalisation.