Eye pressure test may help vision loss in older adults

Researchers at the University of Missouri School of Medicine have developed a new eye pressure test that may help prevent vision loss.

Older adults face a high risk of vision impairment due to high eye pressure and cataract surgery. Scientists say their new test can help patients monitor their eye pressure and prevent possible vision loss later in life.

"The current standard of care following cataract surgery is to refill the eye with a saline solution and tap on the eye with a Q-tip to observe if it is too firm, too soft or just right," researcher John Jarstad explained in a press release. "This Goldilocks-style guesstimate often is inaccurate, and patients might actually have higher eye fluid pressure than the surgeon believes."

University of Missouri scientists use a device called a tonometer to measure eye pressure. The technology was tested in a study involving 170 patients who had eye pressure adjusted during cataract surgery.

The team found the subjects were 2.5 to 4 times more likely to develop cystoid macular edema, cyst-like fluid pockets that can appear in the eye. The findings were presented at the annual Indonesian Ophthalmologists Association meeting.

In addition to allowing patients to monitor their eye pressure, researchers suggest their solution is more cost effective. While a tonometer can cost surgeons roughly $4,000, it may help patients save $150 in medications and eye drops.

"Seeing patients who had gone blind because of high eye pressure convinced me that there needed to be a better, more accurate gauge," Jarstad added. "I recommend eye surgeons adopt this practice for the good of their patients."
MU confirms additional cases of the mumps

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri in Columbia confirmed that 13 more students have been diagnosed with the mumps on Thursday.

The announcement raises the total number of MU students infected by the virus to 17.

Last week, Mizzou announced four students had been diagnosed with the mumps, and the school was awaiting test results for five others.

According to the MU News Bureau, all of the students infected had received a mumps vaccine.

University officials told ABC 17 News that they're working with local and state healthcare workers to stop the spread of the virus, which is transmitted through respiratory droplets.

It can take up to three weeks before symptoms of the mumps show up. Symptoms can include swelling of the jaw, fever and aches.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in October the number of mumps cases in the U.S. is up from 2015. There were 1,057 cases reported last year.

In 2016, 2,345 cases have been reported in 45 states.

MU students who believe they're infected with the mumps are advised to call the health center at 573-882-7481, or their medical provider.

Gathering draws community support after contentious election
COLUMBIA — After the unpredicted presidential election of Donald Trump, a group of MU students and community members upset by the outcome gathered on campus Thursday night to support each other and call for action.

The estimated 200 people in attendance spoke at Speakers Circle about their worry of living under a Trump presidency.

Many stepped forward to share their stories. One woman, MU student Ali Valentino, said she has been grieving over the course of the last couple of days. She also spent quite a bit of time reflecting. On Wednesday, Valentino decided to change her major and joined the MU College of Education. As a future educator, she said, she hopes to make sure the next generation doesn’t repeat mistakes of the past.

"We have to make sure this doesn't happen again," Valentino said.

Darneisha Coleman, also an MU student, stepped up to the center of the circle to encourage activism. She said she wanted people to know that she is willing to stand up against unjust behaviors.

"Love is a verb," Coleman said.

MU junior Husain Agha stood in Speakers Circle throughout most of the last two days wearing a sign reading "Am I the one you fear?"

He said he attended Thursday's event because he thinks it's more important now than ever to stand against hate.

"What I am scared of is hatred and bigotry becoming acceptable," Agha said. One of his main fears is that he will be targeted for being a Pakistani man.
"It's nerve wracking to stand here, but we have a moral obligation to do so," Agha said. "That is how we inspire change."

The event was organized via Facebook by Ellen Hinze, who is a graduate student at the university. Hinze said she's been thinking about having an event like this for a while, but Trump's election spurred her decision to bring people together.

"I have enough awareness of my own privilege to recognize that this election will not impact me as much as it will impact other people," Hinze said.

Many people approached Hinze at the conclusion of the event, thanking her for organizing a space that made them feel safe and supported.

"You are not alone, you are not alone," Hinze said.

Among the attendees were MU Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Catherine Scroggs and Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life, but they declined comment on the demonstration.
Dozens of students hold anti-Trump demonstration on MU campus

COLUMBIA - More than 100 students and faculty gathered in Speakers Circle Thursday night to stand in solidarity against Donald Trump following Tuesday's election.

Students expressed nerves, fear and anger about issues including racism and religious discrimination in front of the crowd.

Participants held candles and wrote a promise and something they love on note cards. They also sang the Black Eyed Peas song "Where Is the Love?", spread out into a large circle around the area and held hands.

The event was not organized through an organization. Graduate student Ellen Hinze said she just organized the event because she wanted to and could.

"I figured this event might inspire people to be able to start the things in their brain that they're thinking of," Hinze said.
How MU students could be affected by Trump’s presidency

In a campaign video on his website, Donald Trump said he is a “tremendous believer in education.”

At a campaign stop in Cleveland, Trump said that there is no policy in need of urgent change more than our “government-run education monopoly.” In early October, Trump also told Chris Wallace, who is the host of “Fox News Sunday,” that he would possibly consider getting rid of the federal Department of Education as a whole.

Regarding the University of Missouri specifically, Trump said on Nov. 12, 2015, that the protests and resignations were “disgusting.” When asked about former UM System President Tim Wolfe and former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, the administrators who resigned Nov. 9, 2015, Trump said that they were “weak, ineffective people.”

"I think that when they resigned, they set something in motion that's going to be a disaster for the next long period of time. They were weak, ineffective people," Trump said. "Trump should have been the chancellor of that university. Believe me, there would have been no resignations.”

In a compilation by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators that addresses both presidential candidates’ stances on higher education, the organization curated Trump’s stance from statements from his campaign co-chair Sam Clovis and an Oct. 13 campaign speech.

According to the NASFAA compilation, Trump called on institutions with large endowments to spend more on students in order to lower college costs. He also wants to address the risk that institutions take when distributing loans to potential students; institutions would take into account a student’s future income. For instance, Clovis said, institutions should be careful lending to liberal arts majors who have lower job security after graduation.

Trump would also take students’ future incomes into account by implementing an income contingent repayment plan. Borrowers would make payments capped at 12 percent of their income, and debt would be canceled after 15 years.

Trump is against tuition-free higher education and President Barack Obama’s proposal for free community college for high school graduates. He would continue to reduce the government’s role in higher education by transitioning the role of lending toward private banks.
The larger, 58-page platform of the Republican Party lays out a plan to end the federal direct student loan program. The party added that it wants to restore greater “private sector participation in student financing.”

Another issue that may affect MU students is the Republican Party’s stance on campus sexual assault. The party’s platform says Obama has micromanaged how colleges and universities would choose to deal with sexual assault. The platform says the reports should be dealt with by only law enforcement, not university officials.

Late in the campaign, Trump came under fire for a video, originally released in 2005, that included audio where Trump boasted about kissing and groping women without their consent.

Last spring, MU began to implement new signs for single-stall bathrooms and showers in older residence halls that read “Women” and “Men.” The signs have now been changed to read “Toilet” or “Toilet and Shower” accordingly, so people can use the restroom that fits with their gender identity.

The platform advises against this, saying the policy of allowing transgender students to use the restroom that matches with their gender identity is “illegal, dangerous and ignores privacy issues.”

MU students who are undocumented immigrants, or their families, could also be affected by Trump’s proposed immigration policies. Trump has said that he would be “very, very tough on the borders” and proposed a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

“I would be not allowing certain people to come into this country without absolute perfect documentation,” Trump said at a rally in March.

Trump has also emphasized that he will make the borders “impenetrable,” and has said that he will increase the power of border patrol agents and police. His plan includes deporting 11 million immigrants.
One Year Since Protests- Students Happy with Progress, Feel Change is Still Needed


MU Student Arrested for Making Online Threats

Jefferson City man charged with first-degree murder posted on Facebook day of stabbing

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - ABC 17 News is continuing to uncover more about an accused killer after he reportedly stabbed two people to death.

Brandon Rapier is accused of stabbing his ex-girlfriend and another man to death.

Court documents show Rapier posted to Facebook nearly twelve hours before the stabbing happened. ABC 17 News looked into the several Facebook posts from Rapier, which stated the following:

"I will have it no other way. I am judge, jury, and my favorite, executioner."

"Never wanted to put anyone down so much in my life. Welcome to degradation."

"If you caught your friend that you would betray in bed with your x that you loved to absolute death... How would you react? What would you do?"
Kelli Canada, University of Missouri School of Social Work said, "It's hard for us to understand completely the compelling need for some people to post a lot."

Canada said a "couple that has a history of violence it's a good indicator that it could happen again."

According to police, Rapier attacked his ex-girlfriend back in 2014; this time killing her.

Tracy Perkins with Boone County Cyber Crimes Unit says, "Some people might say I didn't mean that, but you have to be really careful you have to think of the end result."

So when do you report something out of the ordinary on social media?

According to Canada, "When someone says I'm going to kill someone, I want to kill myself, those are pretty clear indicators that there is a risk and that is a clear indicator someone should take action."

The Boone County Cyber Crimes Unit says the most common type of social media threat has to deal with relationships, whether that be with an ex, family, or friends.

The Incidents Since Election Day

Many campuses have seen graffiti, taunts and more -- with immigrant, Muslim and minority students as targets -- in last 48 hours. Some see a Trump effect.

No MU Mention

Many minority, Muslim and/or immigrant students are reporting increased harassment since Donald Trump was elected president. On many campuses, incidents specifically include Trump's name, and, at others, various slurs are being reported.

Racial and ethnic incidents on campus are hardly new and have been happening since well before Trump entered the presidential race. But as reports circulate about these incidents, some students are saying that things are worse. And their
view has added to anxiety and anger many students feel about the outcome of the election. While many of the reports involve slurs, others include physical attacks.

Here is a sampling of the incidents reported since Trump’s victory became clear.

- After the Trump win, a student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale posted a photo to social media of two people in blackface (above). The university confirmed that the woman in the photo is a student but said that the man is not. Brad Colwell, interim chancellor, sent a message to the campus that said in part, "This week’s presidential election was extremely divisive and emotions are running high. A number of people have contacted my office regarding offensive behavior and comments, including social media posts …. Please know that we deeply share your concerns. We are reviewing every incident and will take appropriate action." He added, "We value individuals, diversity and inclusion. Anything less diminishes all of us. Free speech is an important right and value that we should use wisely and respectfully."

- On Wednesday, a student at San Diego State University reported that she was the victim of a strong-arm robbery. University police are investigating the incident as a hate crime because the student said comments were made mocking her Muslim faith (she was wearing a hijab). Elliot Hirshman, the president, posted a message to students on Facebook, saying that "we condemn this hateful act and urge all members of our community to join us in condemning such hateful acts."

  - Sometime late Tuesday or early Wednesday, someone wrote "Trump" on the door to the Muslim prayer room at New York University’s engineering college, one of them being the door to the Muslim prayer room. K. R. Sreenivasan, the dean, sent students an email message: "It has come to my attention that there has been an instance of defacing the school property as a means of intimidation. I greatly regret that it has happened. We as a community are all different with different sensitivities, and I think it is utterly reasonable to expect that civility and mutual respect will form the core of our collective and individual behaviors. Any time anyone violates this norm, it is an offense against us all."

  - Authorities at Texas State University are investigating fliers that threaten, now that Trump has been elected, to tar and feather "deviant university leaders" who support "diversity garbage," The Austin American-Statesman reported.

  - The University of Louisville has suspended and is investigating multiple cheerleaders for comments they made on social media after the election, ESPN reported. One tweet from a cheerleader told somebody to "stfu about racism, sexism, whateverism," and that this other person acts
like one who "came off a boat." One football player tweeted that he would not want this cheerleader cheering the team at a game.

- Marshall University officials are condemning a student's Trump-inspired tweet, *The Charleston Gazette-Mail* reported. The election night tweet referenced the way Trump spoke on video about how he treats women. "As soon as Trump hits 270 electoral votes I am grabbing the first girl I see by the p----. #MAGA," said the tweet. The hashtag is used by Trump supporters as the acronym of "Make America Great Again," his slogan. The tweet has since been deleted.

- San Jose State University officials are investigating reports that a woman wearing a hijab was attacked in a campus garage.

- Students at Wake Forest University reported that one or more people ran around residence halls shouting slurs against African-Americans. A statement from the university said, "University police are responding to a bias report about a racial slur and have identified two suspects in a single incident. They are working with the person who reported the offensive behavior."

- Authorities at the University of Vermont are investigating a Trump sign that had a swastika drawn over it that was left near the Hillel offices at the university. *The Burlington Free Press* reported that authorities think that one possibility is that the swastika was a comment about Trump, not a comment made by a Trump supporter.

- A national fraternity has kicked out two of its members at Babson College after they drove through Wellesley College waving a Trump flag, *The Boston Globe* reported. Many at Wellesley reported that the two men also made racially offensive comments as they drove by a center for black students.

- At the University of Oregon, a student who had just left a meeting of the Black Student Union Wednesday night encountered three young people (the student guesses that they were too young to be college students) in blackface, *The Oregonian* reported. The student videotaped the young people, and the university has condemned anyone who wears blackface on campus. This incident also follows debate at Oregon over a professor who wore a blackface costume for Halloween.
Trump Win Opens Questions for Colleges’ Books

Federal funding is a top item to watch, along with enrollments and fund-raising.

No MU Mention

Worries about stock market turmoil subsided in the two days since Donald Trump unexpectedly won the presidential election, but many questions still remain about what Tuesday’s results mean for college and university finances.

Will markets turn ugly and imperil endowment returns if Trump proves unpredictable as president? Will proposed changes to the tax code help or hinder fund-raising? What effect could new economic and immigration policies have on the pool of tuition-paying students? And, critically, what will happen to federal funding for research and student financial aid?

Several experts zeroed in on that last question, pointing out that Trump promised substantial tax cuts during his campaign while also promising to protect Social Security and Medicare. With several other potentially big-ticket items proposed -- from a wall on the Mexican border to a major infrastructure-building package -- some believe federal funding for higher education could end up being cut.

“What is going to get cut is discretionary spending,” said John J. Cheslock, director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education and associate professor of education at Pennsylvania State University. “Where does higher education get its money? It gets its money from discretionary spending.”

Public postsecondary institutions across the country collectively received $51.3 billion in revenue from federal grants, contracts and appropriations in 2013-14, according to National Center for Education Statistics data. That was 14.5 percent of their total revenue that year. Private nonprofit postsecondary institutions received $23.7 billion in federal appropriations, grants and contracts, 10.3 percent of total revenue. Some of that grant revenue is from student aid -- Pell Grants are typically reported by public institutions as revenue from federal grants, but they are reported by private institutions as tuition and fees.

The federal government disburses about $130 billion in student aid every year, including federal direct loan, federal Pell Grants and federal work-study programs. Cutbacks in federal aid would place more pressure on colleges’ and
universities’ other sources of funding, including state funding, tuition revenue, endowments and fund-raising.

“If the government spends less on them, that will have an impact,” Cheslock said. “The complete unknown of the economy then impacts tons of things.”

Yet there is still no confirmation that federal funding for higher education will be cut. And if it is, it’s not clear where those cuts would fall. Cheslock believes it’s more likely research grants will be cut than student aid, because students and their families represent more voters than do researchers. If that’s the case, research universities could be harder hit than other institutions.

If public funding from states is a question, it’s one that’s probably not tied to national elections. National politics are unlikely to have a direct effect on state appropriations to higher education, said George Pernsteiner, president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers association. Instead, states’ fiscal concerns will drive them.

“It will be, I think, as we have seen in the last few years, uneven across the country depending on local conditions,” Pernsteiner said.

College and university budgets are most heavily dependent on tuition and fee revenue, however. Trump talked about forcing colleges to cut their tuition rates while he was on the campaign trial. His anti-immigration rhetoric has also worried international students and caught the attention of the financial community.

Moody’s Investors Service focused on potential changes in government policies on immigration, student visas and poststudy work by international students in a report on Trump’s proposals. Immigration changes could immediately affect universities’ international enrollment, which has spiked by 73 percent in the last decade, Moody’s wrote.

“Loss of tuition revenue from international students, an important revenue diversifier for some universities, would be credit negative, particularly for universities with less well-known global brands and those that more recently entered the international student market,” according to Moody’s.

Experts, meanwhile, wondered what Trump’s economic proposals could do to tuition revenue.

If Trump’s policies like trade protectionism and infrastructure spending end up boosting middle-class families’ fortunes, it could mean a boom for enrollments as families attain a newfound ability to send students to college. Subsequently, that would likely boost college revenues. But if the income gap widens under Trump, or if student aid is cut substantially, enrollments could fall.

“Most schools are tuition driven,” said David Strauss, a principal at Baltimore-based strategy consulting firm Art & Science Group. “Enrollment revenues might change in a dramatic way.”
Those in fund-raising have raised several possible scenarios going forward, Strauss said. Trump’s proposed tax cuts could benefit wealthy donors, providing them with more money to give away to colleges and universities. Major gifts already tend to come from the wealthy.

But Strauss talked to one official in a college development office who worried that Republicans in Congress will slash the size of the federal government, pulling it back from some issues that motivate well-heeled donors. If, for example, the Environmental Protection Agency is gutted, some donors might give to environmental causes instead of universities.

“He is envisioning a potential for greater philanthropic competition as government pulls back from things,” Strauss said of the conversation with the development officer.

There does not appear to be any direct connection between the presidency and giving patterns, said Noah Drezner, an associate professor of higher education at Columbia University Teachers College. The state of the economy plays a major role in giving, though. Years with large market sell-offs often bring drops in giving.

“We see drops during and slightly after each recession,” Drezner said in an email. “Stock market volatility is an indicator of giving patterns, as most large gifts involve some portion of appreciated assets.”

Drezner agreed tax policy can play a role in donors’ actions. He pointed to the historical precedent of the 1986 tax cuts put in place under Ronald Reagan’s administration. Giving increased just before the cuts were put in place, and then it dropped off sharply afterward. He attributed the change to the tax cut effectively lowering the benefit of giving.

“People gave more when the benefit was higher and slowed their giving right after,” Drezner said.

There is also no clear relationship between elections and endowment returns. A look at National Association of College and University Business Officers data on median annual U.S. college and university endowment returns in the fiscal years that ended after the last six presidential elections showed only two years of negative returns. Those years were 2001 and 2009, when recessions that predated elections were underway.

Since the election, U.S. markets have done well, more than recovering from an initial plunge Tuesday night when it first became clear Trump was winning the presidency. The Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index is down postelection. That comes after many endowment managers decided to hold firm to their strategies as Election Day approached.
The question for endowment managers now is one of adjusting to asset classes and stocks that could be impacted by the changes in Washington, said Michael H. Strauss, chief economist at asset management firm Commonfund.

“We haven’t seen massive changes from endowments,” he said. “You will probably see more of a focus toward equity exposure and away from traditional fixed-income exposure.”

Trump has talked about colleges and universities needing to spend money from their endowments, and some Republicans have proposed minimum spending requirements. But while that might have an impact on institutions’ ability to grow their endowments, it’s unlikely to significantly impact most college operating budgets.

“If they make institutions increase the spending rate, it all depends on how far they go,” said Rick Hesel, another principal at Art & Science. “For a lot of places, it doesn’t make a lot of difference in what it contributes to the operating expenses.”

The possibility also exists that Trump and the Republican Congress will seek to cut many of the regulations put in place under President Obama’s administration. Some believe that could cut institutions’ costs. Others worry that deregulation could lead to a return to the for-profit college industry, increasing competition for federal funding.

At the end of the day, it’s hard to tell what Trump will do, said Michelle Asha Cooper, president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

“During the election season, we have not been given much detail about his interest or platform for higher education,” she said. “It makes it very difficult to predict what the future might hold, not just in terms of institutional finance but in a number of areas.”

That left colleges and universities watching.

“All the institutions are likely to wait and see,” said Pernsteiner, the SHEEO president.