



Short sighted future

The largest eye study in Australia is hoping to understand why more people are suffering from myopia.

To discover why more people are suffering myopia, or short sightedness, an Australian group has commenced the largest eye study ever.

Professor Paul Mitchell, who is an eye expert at the University of Sydney's Department of Ophthalmology, wants to find out why myopia is increasing, and try to stop it. He has begun a series of random eye tests on 2400 Sydney school kids.

Although myopia is easily corrected with glasses, contacts or laser surgery, many eye specialists are concerned that it may lead to more serious problems in later years.

"People with myopia may also develop age-related diseases like a cataract or glaucoma at an earlier age," says Paul.

In a pilot study, Paul found that 40 per cent of kids more than 14-years-old had early or mild myopia.

"We think one of the reasons behind this is that children today do a lot more near work, including greater use of computers and computer games," says Paul.

"Kids living in cities and those playing less sport have very limited need for distance viewing, and this could be a factor."

Sonia Singh