



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**American Academy of Optometry Foundation and Meta Reality Labs Research
Announce Recipients of the Myopia Research Grant**

Winter Park, FL (May 26, 2026) – The American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF) and Meta Reality Labs Research (RLR) are pleased to announce the recipients of the Myopia Research Grant.

This grant provides three awards of \$500,000 USD each to researchers working to accelerate the understanding of myopia and the role visual experience plays in its development and progression through longitudinal, open-science research.

These researchers will make not only their publications publicly available but also the data behind them according to the FAIR data principles, along with metadata artifacts necessary to interpret them. This will allow for additional comparison and harmonization, reproducibility, and federated analysis of these datasets by other researchers, enabling a collaborative effort to solve the riddle of visual experience's role in myopia development.

“As myopia continues to emerge as a prevalent global public health concern, supporting innovative, open-science research has never been more important,” said AAOF Board President, Valerie Sharpe, OD, FAAO. “The American Academy of Optometry Foundation is proud to recognize these exceptional awardees whose work has the potential to meaningfully advance our understanding of myopia development.”

2026 Grant Recipients

Ranjay Chakraborty, BS Optom, PhD – Flinders University

Study: Objective Measures of Ambient Light Exposure and Near Work in Pre-Myopic Children: A Cross-Continental Longitudinal Study across 100 Degrees of Latitude: Light X Near Study

Safal Khanal, OD, PhD, FAAO – University of Alabama at Birmingham

Study: Longitudinal interaction of the visual diet with optical, structural, and neural factors in childhood myopia

Xiaoying Zhu, OD, PhD, MD, MS, FAAO – State University of New York

Study: Longitudinal measurements of visual diet and visuomotor activity in children

The Myopia Research Grant recipients will be formally recognized during Academy 2026 Anaheim at the Foundation First Night event on Wednesday, September 30, 2026.

About the American Academy of Optometry Foundation

The American Academy of Optometry Foundation is the 501(c)(3) philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Optometry. It was founded in 1947 for “upholding, broadening, fostering, promoting, and aiding optometric education, the profession of optometry, and its practitioners.” The Foundation provides financial support for optometric research and vision and eye health education to improve patient clinical care. Learn more at www.aaopt.org/aaof.

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