

Melanoma rates doubled in the past 30 years, even worse among young people

By ACSH Staff — June 8, 2015



Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. An estimated 73,800 new cases of melanoma, and almost 10,000 deaths, will occur this year. And now researchers have found that rates of melanoma have doubled over the past 30 years, according to a report by the CDC.

The [Vital Signs study](#) [1], published in the June 2nd *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, states that melanoma rates increased from 11.2 cases per 100,000 people in 1982 to 22.7 cases per 100,000 people in 2011.

Melanoma incidence rates increased with age, and were by far the highest among non-Hispanic whites, with 24.6 cases for every 100,000 people. Among people aged 15-49 years, higher rates were observed among women, however for people 50 years and older, higher rates were observed among men.

The study's authors conclude, If additional prevention efforts are not undertaken, the number of melanoma cases is projected to increase over the next 15 years, with accompanying increases in health care costs. Much of this morbidity, mortality, and health care cost can be prevented.

Additionally, another [recent study](#) [2] found that melanoma rates have increased by 250 percent among US children and young adults since the 1970s. The study was presented by the Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) at the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting in Chicago last month.

The researchers, led by Dr. Nikhil Khushalani, examined almost 36,000 cases of melanoma among patients younger than 40 diagnosed between 1973 and 2011. The Roswell Park team found that women accounted for 57 percent of melanomas reported between 1973 and 1980, but this percentage rose to 65 percent by 2011. This is likely due to unsafe tanning practices such as sunbathing and indoor tanning, say the researchers.

"The rate of people getting melanoma continues to increase every year compared to the rates of most other cancers, which are declining," [said Dr. Lisa Richardson](#) [3], the director of the Division of

Cancer Prevention and Control. "If we take action now, we can prevent hundreds of thousands of new cases of skin cancers, including melanoma, and save billions of dollars in medical costs."

Despite the growing number of skin cancer cases in the US, [Americans still aren't wearing sunscreen](#) [4], as we reported recently. More than 90 percent of melanoma cases in the United States are attributed to skin cell damage from ultraviolet (UV) radiation and exposure.

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross added this comment: The two most important reasons for the disturbing increase in melanoma are the strong belief especially among young girls and women that tanning salons give them healthy glow, when, sadly, the opposite is happening to their skin; and the difficulty in convincing sun-bathers to keep themselves slathered in high-SPF sunscreen when in the sun. Sadly, some of our so-called environmental groups are more devoted to their chemophobic agenda than to public health, with their [repeated alarms](#) [5] about toxic chemicals in sunscreens. Yes, I am referring to you, *Environmental Working Group* and your spin-off scaremongers at the *Campaign for Safe Cosmetics*. I cannot say how much of the decline in sunscreen usage among our young people is attributable to EWG's irresponsible alarmism, but however many are following their advice is that number too many.

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Links

[1] http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm64e0602a1.htm?s_cid=mm64e0602a1_e

[2] http://meeting.ascopubs.org/cgi/content/short/33/15_suppl/9058?rss=1

[3] <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0602-melanoma-cancer.html>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2015/05/americans-still-arent-wearing-sunscreen/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/2015/05/more-sun-screaming-on-sunscreen-from-the-chemophobic-ewg/>