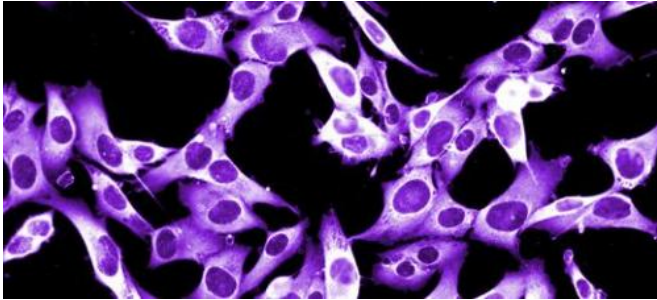


Skin cancer death rates 70 percent higher in men

21 August 2013



(Medical Xpress)—According to research conducted by Cancer Research UK and the University of Leeds, 3.4 men per 100,000 die from malignant melanoma each year in the UK, compared with 2.0 women. But incidence rates are similar with 17.2 men per 100,000 diagnosed compared with 17.3 women.

This means that, of the 6,200 men who develop [melanoma](#) each year, 1,300 die from the disease, while 900 of the 6,600 women who develop it die.

The [gap](#) is predicted to widen in the future, with death rates from malignant melanoma on the increase in men but remaining stable for women.

Professor Julia Newton-Bishop from the University of Leeds said: "Research has suggested the difference between the [sexes](#) could be in part because men are more likely to be diagnosed when melanoma is at a more advanced stage. But there also seem to be strong biological reasons behind the differences and we're working on research to better understand why men and women's bodies deal with their melanomas in different ways.

"We also know that men and women tend to

develop melanoma in different places – more often on the back and chest for men and on the arms and legs for women. If melanoma does develop on your back then it may be more difficult to spot – asking your partner to check your back is a good idea."

Sara Hiom, director of early diagnosis at Cancer Research UK, said: "One of the reasons for the difference may be attitudes towards seeing a doctor. We tend to be reluctant to 'waste the doctor's time' - men are especially likely to put it off.

"If something goes wrong with the car then you sort it out straight away. The same should go for you – if you, or your partner, notice any unusual or persistent changes then see your GP. The key thing is to get to know your skin and what's normal for you so you're more likely to notice something out of the ordinary.

"It's also essential to take care not to burn, particularly given the [sunny weather](#) we've had this summer. Sunburn is a clear sign that the DNA in your skin cells has been damaged and, over time, this can lead to [skin cancer](#). When the sun is strong, pop on a t-shirt, spend some time in the shade and use a sunscreen with at least SPF15 and good UVA protection – the higher the star rating, the better.

"These habits are particularly important for young men and women, because it's far better to prevent skin cancer in the first place. That means avoiding sunbeds, as well as taking care in the sun. Research has shown that using sunbeds for the first time before 35 can increase your risk of [malignant melanoma](#) by nearly 60%."

Since the early 70s, male [death rates](#) in men have risen by 185% compared to a rise of only 55% in women.

The key risk factors for melanoma include excessive exposure to UV from sunlight or

sunbeds, pale skin colour and a high number of moles, and a family or personal history of the disease.

Provided by University of Leeds

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