Latinos Are at Risk for Skin Cancer

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Latinos are slacking on the sunscreen and summer sun protection, putting themselves at risk for skin cancer, according to a study published in the *Archives of Dermatology* and reported by Reuters.

Assuming their darker skin means they can't get skin cancer, Latinos are apparently ignoring sun health campaigns and heading into the sun. But no one, regardless of skin color, is immune to melanoma.

For the survey, which was conducted in 2005, researchers spoke to approximately 500 Latino participants about their sun safety behaviors (including how often they wore sunscreen or practiced other safety behaviors, like wearing long sleeves and pants or spending time in the shade), their physical health, education and their connections with friends and family.

Researchers also queried respondents about how comfortable they were with the English language and how long they had been living in the United States.

Out of 496 participants, researchers found that only 15 percent said they always used sunscreen, compared to 39 percent who said they never did. In addition, only about 26 percent said they always stayed in the shade on sunny days, and 13 percent said they wore the appropriate clothing.

Researchers also found that Latinos who had been living in the United States for longer, or had a better grasp of the language, were more likely to use sunscreen (but less likely to wear sun safe gear) than those immigrants who mostly spoke Spanish.

This is disheartening news for Latinos, who are more at risk for melanoma than other ethnic groups and are more likely to be diagnosed with skin cancer at a more advanced stage.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, everyone spending a day outside should apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and both UVA and UVB protection every two hours and after swimming or sweating, even if it's cloudy. That should be coupled with long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses when possible. And finally, everyone should head to the shade when the sun's UV rays are strongest, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

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