

# Heart transplant patients at risk for serious skin cancers

June 30 2011

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A new study published in the *American Journal of Transplantation* reveals that there is a significant risk of serious skin cancers, including cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma, in heart transplant patients.

When people receive [heart transplants](#), they need immune medications to keep their body from rejecting the transplant. The changes to the immune system they experience as a result of the medications can also make them more susceptible to developing cancers.

Led by Murad Alam, MD, MSCI, of Northwestern University, researchers studied 10 years of patient information regarding 6271 heart transplants at 32 U.S. transplant centers.

Results showed that when looking at what happened to many patients transplanted over a decade at various places in the U.S., these heart transplant patients were more likely to get skin cancers than other patients who had not had such transplants. The incidence increased post-transplant from 4- to 30-fold.

"Improved patient education and appropriately increased screening and detection of skin cancers in heart transplant patients may potentially reduce their risk of serious morbidity and mortality," Alam notes.

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Heart transplant patients at risk for serious skin cancers (2011, June 30) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-06-heart-transplant-patients-skin-cancers.html>

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