

Activities, smoking affect lymph node involvement in melanoma

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(HealthDay) -- Several factors, including sporting activity, physical workload, and smoking habits, affect the sonomorphologic characteristics of peripheral lymph nodes (LNs) in patients with a history of invasive cutaneous melanoma, according to research published online Feb. 29 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

Torsten Hinz, M.D., of the University of Bonn in Germany, and colleagues conducted a prospective study involving 200 consecutive patients with a history of invasive cutaneous melanoma. They sought to determine what influence, if any, a patient's sporting activity, physical workload, interferon alfa therapy, smoking habits, and upper [respiratory tract infections](#) may have on the number and morphology of peripheral LNs, as examined using high-resolution ultrasound of the cervical,

[axillary](#), and inguinal lymph node regions.

The researchers found that, compared with non-active patients, patients with a history of invasive cutaneous melanoma who were highly active in sports tended to have a higher number of LNs in the inguinal region, a higher volume and larger LN diameter, and a higher maximum width of the hypoechoic LN margin. Those whose occupation included heavy physical workloads had a significantly larger volume of the biggest LNs. Smokers also tended to have more LNs, more large-volume LNs, and the largest diameter of LNs in the cervical regions, when compared with nonsmokers.

"Although these influencing factors and their associated mechanisms of action are not fully understood so far, they should always be considered when performing ultrasound examinations of the peripheral LNs in patients with cutaneous melanoma," the authors write.

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