

# Study suggests link between smoking, increased risk of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma

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Smoking appears to be associated with an increased risk of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma skin cancer, according to a report of a meta-analysis and review of available medical literature published Online First by *Archives of Dermatology*.

About 97 percent of skin cancers are epithelial (cells that cover the skin) in origin and are either basal [cell carcinomas](#) (BCCs) or squamous cell carcinomas (SCCs), which are collectively known as nonmelanoma skin cancer (NMSC). The incidence of NMSC is increasing worldwide with an estimated 2 million to 3 million new cases each year, according to the study background.

The review of the relevant medical literature by Jo Leonardi-Bee, Ph.D, of the U.K. Centre for [Tobacco Control](#) Studies, University of Nottingham, England, and colleagues included 25 studies.

"This systematic review and meta-analysis has shown a clear and consistent relationship between smoking and cutaneous SCC, with a 52 percent significant increase in odds," the authors comment. "However, no clear association was noted between smoking and BCC or NMSC. The largest effect sizes for the association with cutaneous SCC were seen in current or ever smokers, with smaller effect sizes occurring in former smokers."

The authors note the results of their work are generalizable because the studies reported results from 11 countries across four continents and most of the studies were conducted in middle-aged to elderly populations.

"This study highlights the importance for clinicians to actively survey high-risk patients, including current smokers, to identify early skin cancers, since early diagnosis can improve prognosis because early lesions are simpler to treat compared with larger or neglected lesions," the researchers conclude.

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