

Airline pilots, cabin crews have higher incidence of melanoma

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Airline pilots and cabin crews appear to have twice the incidence of melanoma as the general population.

Melanoma is a common cancer in the United States; in 2014, 76,100 people will be diagnosed with the skin cancer and 9,710 people will die. Several studies have suggested a higher incidence of melanoma in pilots and flight crew. Flight-based workers are thought to have a greater occupational hazard risk of melanoma because of increased altitude-related exposure to UV and cosmic radiation. While the risks of exposure to ionizing radiation for pilots and cabin crew are known and the levels regularly monitored, UV exposure is not a well-recognized occupational risk factor for the flight crew.

The authors assessed the risk of melanoma in pilots and airline crew by reviewing medical literature. Their meta-analysis included 19 studies with more than 266,000 participants.

The overall summary standardized incidence ratio (SIR) of melanoma for any flight-based occupation was 2.21, the summary SIR for pilots was 2.22 and 2.09 for cabin crew.

"In this systematic review and meta-analysis including 19 studies and more than a quarter of a million participants, we found that the combined and separate SIRs for pilots and cabin crew were greater than the 2, indicating that [pilots](#) and air crew have twice the incidence of [melanoma](#) compared with the [general population](#). ... This has important

implications for occupational health and protection of this population." Martina Sanlorenzo, M.D., of the University of California, San Francisco, and colleagues wrote in their *JAMA Dermatology* paper.

More information: *JAMA Dermatology*. Published online September 3, 2014. [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2014.1077](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2014.1077)

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