

Study examines availability of tanning beds on and near college campuses

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Among the top 125 colleges on a list compiled by U.S. News & World Report, 48 percent have indoor tanning facilities either on campus or in off-campus housing despite evidence that tanning is a risk factor for skin cancer, according to a study published online by *JAMA Dermatology*.

Tanning is a widespread habit among young adults, especially non-Latino white women. While other studies have examined the tanning habits of college students, no study has examined the availability of tanning salons on or near college campuses, according to background information in the study.

Sherry L. Pagoto, Ph.D., of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, and colleagues relied on the magazine's list of [colleges](#) and then used the internet and telephone to inquire about tanning services, as well as payment options for them, such as campus cash cards.

Indoor tanning was available on campus in 12 percent of colleges and in off-campus housing at 42.4 percent of colleges. About 14.4 percent of colleges allowed campus cash cards to be used to pay for tanning services and most off-campus housing facilities with tanning services provided them for free to tenants. The authors found Midwestern colleges had the highest prevalence of [indoor tanning](#) on campus (26.9 percent), while colleges in the South had the highest prevalence of off-campus housing facilities with indoor tanning (67.7 percent).

"Public health efforts are needed to raise university administration and student population awareness of the harms that indoor tanning poses to young adults in order to increase demand for policy-related action. ... The presence of indoor tanning facilities on and near college campuses may passively reinforce indoor tanning in college students, thereby facilitating behavior that will increase their risk for [skin cancer](#) both in the short term and later in life. In step with tobacco-free policies, tanning-free policies on college campuses may have high potential to reduce skin cancer risk in [young adults](#)."

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