

Another foe for the U.S. military: skin cancer

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(HealthDay)—For U.S. military personnel, deployment carries many dangers. And besides the well-known threats they face, these men and women are also at a higher-than-average risk for skin cancer, including

potentially deadly melanoma, a new research review suggests.

Two military groups face a particularly high risk: white service members and men over 50, according to the report.

"From the Pacific Theater in World War II to more recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. military members have been deployed to areas where they face prolonged exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays," said study author and dermatologist Dr. Jennifer Powers.

"This exposure is even more intense for those serving in desert environments because the sun's rays reflect off of sand," she added in a news release from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD).

For the new report, the researchers analyzed nine prior studies. Both active-duty and retired personnel face an increased risk of [skin cancer](#), the findings showed.

One reason those who serve are at greater risk: Sun protection is not a priority in the military, the researchers said. That means wearing protective clothing (apart from uniform requirements) is not the norm. Nor is sunscreen use, the researchers said.

Although service members may not be able to reduce their risk of sun exposure during deployment, they can take steps to detect [skin cancer](#) early, when it's most treatable, according to the news release.

The AAD recommends you check your skin (with or without a partner) to look for possible signs of skin cancer, and to visit a dermatologist if you see suspicious spotting, itching or bleeding.

The report was published in the June issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

More information: There's more on skin cancer at the [American Academy of Dermatology](#).

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