

Lack of self-exams hampers early melanoma identification

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(HealthDay)—The biggest obstacle to early detection and treatment of

melanoma among residents of rural, frontier communities is a chronic lack of skin self-examination (SSE), according to a study recently published in *Psychology, Health & Medicine*.

Jakob D. Jensen, Ph.D., from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, and colleagues surveyed 107 adults living in a U.S. frontier county to assess SSE behaviors and barriers to conducting SSEs. Frontier counties were defined as having fewer than seven people per square mile.

The researchers found that 43 percent of participants were classified as inclined abstainers, defined as individuals who intended to perform SSE but failed to follow through. Inclined abstainers were more likely to be hindered by 12 barriers, including forgetting, letting other tasks get in the way of SSE, and struggling to determine a good time or routine for SSE, compared with those who did follow through.

"Intervention and implementation efforts could be designed to target the inclined abstainers in these frontier areas. They are the low-hanging fruit," a coauthor said in a statement. "They also want to do it. It's easier to motivate these people than the disinclined ones. For a lot of them, performing skin examination is hard to remember, so a strategy could be for them to do it the first of every month—developing some type of ritual. Promoting those kind of things through interventions might yield positive results."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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