

Study examines potential link between partner bereavement and skin cancer

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Human skin structure. Credit: Wikipedia

Psychological stress has been proposed as a risk factor for melanoma, but clinical evidence is limited.

A recent *British Journal of Dermatology* study funded by the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology looked for a potential link

between the death of a partner, which is one of the most stressful life events, and melanoma. The research was carried out by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark.

In the study, which included information from the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink and Danish nationwide registries, investigators found that partner bereavement was linked with a decreased risk of being diagnosed with melanoma, but with an increased risk of dying after being diagnosed.

"The study findings are interesting and may relate to bereaved people no longer having someone to help with skin examinations, leading to delays in diagnosis, although we cannot rule out stress being important in melanoma progression," said senior author Sinéad Langan, Ph.D., of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

More information: A.Y.S. Wong et al, The association between partner bereavement and melanoma: cohort studies in the U.K. and Denmark, *British Journal of Dermatology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/bjd.18889](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.18889)

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