Rural residents continue to have higher odds of skin cancer, study finds

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Urban-rural disparities in skin cancer prevalence continue to persist, according to a study published in the June issue of the Journal of Drugs in Dermatology.
Rachel R. Lin, from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and colleagues used data from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (2018 to 2021) to compare the prevalence of skin cancer by urban versus rural status.

The researchers found that rural residents were significantly more likely to have a positive skin cancer history across most social determinants of health, including across all races. Compared with urban peers, rural non-Hispanic White individuals had greater odds of skin cancer history (odds ratio, 1.40). The odds of skin cancer history were nearly doubled for rural Black (odds ratio, 1.74), Hispanic (odds ratio, 2.31), and other-race, non-Hispanic individuals (odds ratio, 1.99), while the odds were 20-fold higher for Asians (odds ratio, 20.46).

When household income was more than $100,000, there were no significant differences noted in prevalence or odds of skin cancer history between urban and rural settings.

"Increasing awareness of vulnerable sociodemographic groups can help direct necessary attention to these communities regarding skin cancer prevention and screening," the authors write. "More research is needed to further disseminate risk and determine effective public health strategies for skin cancer among these rural communities."


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