

Patients with hyperpigmentation more likely to use sunscreen, few use other sun-protection measures

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Researchers at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) have found patients with hyperpigmentation, a medical disorder that leads to darkening or increase in the natural color of the skin, are more likely to use sunscreen but do not use other protection measures.

Sun protection is recommended for maintaining healthy [skin](#) and preventing skin cancer, but for [patients](#) with hyperpigmentation it is also essential to their treatment. There have been many studies on the general populations' sun-protective behaviors, but until now there has been little research into how hyperpigmentation patients are shielding themselves from the sun.

The survey looked at 404 adults who had a diagnosis of cutaneous hyperpigmentation. The majority of the patients reported using [sunscreen](#), a number significantly higher than the general public. Women were more likely to wear sunscreen, as were white and Hispanic patients, which is consistent with other studies. Patient's answers were also significantly affected by their particular diagnosis. Those with melasma, which causes brown patches on the face, were more likely to wear sunscreen than those with other disorders.

While researchers found hyperpigmentation led to an increased use of sunscreen among patients, few reported taking other [sun protection](#)

measures or reapplying sunscreen every two hours. Nearly half of the sunscreen users didn't know if their sunscreen provided broad spectrum protection.

"It is important for providers to educate patients on the many ways to keep their skin safe in the sun," said Neelam Vashi, MD, Director of the Center for Ethnic Skin at Boston University and Boston Medical Center and Assistant Professor of Dermatology at BUSM, who led the study. "It's encouraging that so many patients are utilizing sunscreen, but we can still improve the practice of safe sun behaviors by improving counseling early in patients' diagnosis, recommending sunscreen use for all ethnicities, and providing a wide range of methods to decrease sun exposure."

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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