

# Health effects of sunlight exposure in the United States: results from the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1971-1974.

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# Health Effects of Sunlight Exposure in the United States Results From the First National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1971-1974

Arnold Engel, MD, MPH; Marie-Louise Johnson, MD, PhD; Suzanne G. Haynes, PhD

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## Abstract

† The dermatologic component of the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (N = 20637), conducted from 1971 through 1974, documented the deleterious effect of ultraviolet radiation on selected skin and eye conditions. Actinic skin damage was more frequent in white men with high as compared with low sunlight exposure, 36.7% vs 23.3%, respectively. Among white women, the

corresponding figures were 34.1% vs 18.6%, respectively. Actinic damage was found more often in individuals with light eye color. Basal cell epitheliomas were found in 11.3% of white men aged 65 to 74 years who had severely actinic-damaged skin as compared with 1.0% of those with undamaged skin. Sunlight exposure was positively associated with localized hypomelanism, localized hypermelanism, seborrheic keratoses, senile lentiginos, freckles, acne rosacea, spider nevi, varicose veins, venus star, dry skin, wrinkled skin, pterygia, arcus senilis, and a variety of minor oral lesions of the tongue, palate, and buccal mucosa. These findings suggest that a large number of dermatologic conditions, which may in part result from overexposure to sunlight, may be preventable.

(*Arch Dermatol* 1988;124:72-79)

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