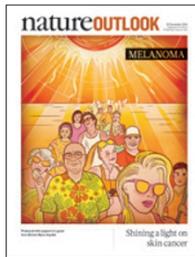


# natureOUTLOOK

## MELANOMA

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**M**elanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer and strikes tens of thousands of people around the world each year. The number of cases is rising faster than any other type of solid cancer (see page S110).

It is usually caused by too much exposure to the Sun's ultraviolet radiation. But the link between sunshine and melanoma is not as straightforward as it seems. The pattern of exposure can be just as important as the total amount of ultraviolet radiation that reaches the skin (S112).

Because the cause of melanoma is so well known, it seems strange that the incidence keeps rising. But although we have the tools to prevent the disease, we do not always use them (S117 and S126), and not enough people take action to reduce their risk. Australia, which has the highest rate of melanoma, has been slowly getting the disease under control and may have some lessons to teach the rest of the world (S114).

For those hoping to skip the demands of a sun-safe routine and simply take a sunscreen pill instead, the news is not so good. There is little evidence that any drug will be able to offer full sun protection (S124).

For those who do develop melanoma, however, the chances of recovery are rising. Targeted treatments and therapies that use the body's own immune system have been developed in the past few years (S118).

Although melanoma is primarily an affliction of the fair-skinned, it can also strike those with a darker complexion. The disease in black populations seems to have a different biology to that in lighter-skinned people, and is also particularly deadly (S121).

We are pleased to acknowledge that this Outlook was produced with support of a grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb. As always, *Nature* retains sole responsibility for all editorial content.

**Brian Owens**  
*Contributing Editor*

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