

Taking aspirin could lower skin cancer risk

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Melanoma is most commonly caused by UV light from the sun. Photo / Thinkstock
Women who take aspirin are less likely to develop skin cancer, new research suggests.

A new study, published in the journal *Cancer*, examined the medication diaries of 60,000 women aged between 50 and 79.

Researchers followed up with each participant for 12 years and found women taking aspirin were 21 per cent less likely to have had melanoma compared to those who didn't take the medication, typically used for headaches or minor aches and pains.

The results weren't seen in women who took other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like Tylenol, *Medical Daily* reported.

However, researchers warn they still need to do more testing and find out more about the causative link.

"Aspirin works by reducing inflammation and this may be why using aspirin may lower your risk of developing melanoma," said Dr Jean Tang from the Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, who led the study.

The data shows a dose duration dependence - women who had taken aspirin for longer periods of time had lower rates of melanoma.

The results were most dramatic when aspirin had been taken for extended periods of time. Women who had taken the med for more than five years had 30 per cent lower risk of melanoma compared to participants who didn't take the anti-inflammatory.

Most melanomas are caused by exposure to UV rays in sunlight, according to the Melanoma Foundation of NZ.

It's the fourth most common cancer in New Zealand, with more than 2000 new cases each year.

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