

## Higher Risk of Rare Melanoma...

Senior author Dr. Rebecca I. Hartman of Brigham and Women's Hospital said acral melanoma behaves differently from other melanomas and often responds less well to current therapies.

"Acral melanoma has a poorer prognosis than the more common cutaneous melanoma because it is often diagnosed at later stages," Hartman said. "Identifying risk factors is critical to improving detection and outcomes."

Agent Orange was used extensively during the Vietnam War and exposure has been linked to several cancers and chronic illnesses. These findings add to evidence the herbicide may also affect the skin in ways not reflected in traditional melanoma awareness efforts.

Acral melanoma has also been associated with sex, race and ethnicity, and prior skin lesions. Researchers said the study supports treating the disease as distinct from sun-driven melanomas that dominate public education campaigns.

For veterans, the research highlights the importance of examining less visible areas of the body, including the bottoms of the feet, between the toes and under the nails. Changes in nail color, dark streaks or unexplained spots on the palms or soles should be evaluated by a health care provider, especially for those with known Agent Orange exposure.

Researchers said the findings could help guide future screening strategies for higher-risk populations and encourage further study of why acral melanoma differs biologically from other skin cancers.

Find more information at [curemelanoma.org](http://curemelanoma.org).



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