

Partners of patients with melanoma find new cancers with skin exam training

June 29 2016



Melanoma in skin biopsy with H&E stain—this case may represent superficial spreading melanoma. Credit: Wikipedia/CC BY-SA 3.0

Skin-check partners of patients with melanoma effectively performed skin self-examinations and identified new melanomas as part of an effort to increase early detection of the skin cancer that can be fatal, according to the results of a clinical trial published online by *JAMA Dermatology*.

Patients with [melanoma](#) are at increased risk of developing a second primary melanoma. Patients with melanoma and their partners can help to manage early detection of new or recurrent melanoma with [skin](#) self-examination (SSE).

June K. Robinson, M.D., of the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, and coauthors conducted a randomized clinical trial with 24 months of follow-up with [patients](#) with stage 0 to IIB melanoma and their skin-check partners.

The study enrolled 494 participants who were assigned to either usual care (n=99) or to the skill-based intervention for SSE, which was delivered either in-person in the office (n=165), in a workbook (n= 159) or on a tablet (n=71). Skills to recognize change in the border, color and diameter of moles were reinforced in four-month intervals during skin examinations by a dermatologist.

Of the 494 patients, 66 developed new melanomas. Patient-partner pairs in intervention (n=395) identified 43 melanomas. In comparison, none of the patient-partner pairs in the comparison control group identified melanoma, according to the results.

Study limitations include relying on self-reported survey responses.

"Future research will determine if a skills training program delivered via the web without reinforcement by the dermatologist will yield reliable sustained performance of SSE by those at risk to develop another melanoma," the study concludes.

More information: *JAMA Dermatology*. Published online June 29, 2016. [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2016.1985](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2016.1985)

Provided by The JAMA Network Journals

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