

Hand-holding, stress ball don't cut anxiety in skin CA removal

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(HealthDay)—Hand-holding and squeezing a stress ball do not provide

anxiety reduction among patients during excisional removal of non-melanoma skin cancer, according to a study published online July 18 in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Arianna F. Yanes, from Northwestern University in Chicago, and colleagues conducted a [randomized trial](#) involving 135 adults who required excisional removal of non-melanoma skin cancer of the head or neck. Participants were randomized to hand-holding, [stress ball](#), or control (treatment as usual) in a 1:1:1 ratio.

The researchers found that in all groups, [anxiety](#) decreased over time, but no significant differences were found between the groups in the three anxiety measures (visual analogue scale [VAS] anxiety score before: control group, 3.11; hand-holding group, 3.04; stress ball group, 3.09 [P > 0.99]; VAS anxiety score during: 1.89, 2.31, and 2.47, respectively [P = 0.55]; and six-item State Trait Anxiety Inventory score: 8.91, 8.93, and 8.76, respectively [P = 0.96]). Postoperative pain scores did not differ significantly between the groups (0.78, 0.64, and 0.67, respectively [P = 0.85]). More than 99 percent of participants (99.2 percent) were very satisfied. Preoperative anxiety VAS scores were higher for participants who had done research versus those who did not do research (3.84 versus 2.62; P = 0.04).

"Hand-holding and squeezing a stress ball do not appear to provide incremental anxiety reduction in patients during excisional skin cancer surgery," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the biotechnology industry.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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