

Dermatopathologists favor making pathologic reports available

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(HealthDay)—Most dermatopathologists perceive that making

pathologic test result reports available to patients is a good idea, although they are concerned about increasing patient worry and confusion, according to a study published online Jan. 29 in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Hannah Shucard, from the University of Washington in Seattle, and colleagues examined dermatopathologists' experiences and perceptions of patient online access to pathology reports using data from a survey completed by 160 U.S. dermatopathologists.

The researchers found that 57 percent of participants reported having been contacted directly by patients about pathologic [test](#) reports they had written. Some participants noted that if patients were reading their reports, they would decrease use of abbreviations and/or specialized terminology, change the way they describe lesions suspicious for cancer, and need specialized training in communicating with patients (36, 18, and 24 percent, respectively). Most participants perceived that owing to the availability of online reports, patient understanding would increase (61 percent) and the quality of patient-physician communication would increase (61 percent). More respondents perceived increased patient worry (71 percent) and confusion (73 percent). Seventy-one percent of participants agreed that on balance, making pathologic test result reports available to patients online is a good idea.

"As patient access to pathologic test result reports increases, it is important to consider [best practices](#) to minimize potential negative consequences for [patients](#) and clinicians," the authors write.

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