In situ, invasive melanoma diagnoses decreased in 2020

September 7 2023, by Elana Gotkine

During 2020, there were decreases seen for in situ and invasive
melanoma diagnoses, according to a research letter published online Sept. 6 in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Daniel Y. Kim, from Harvard Medical School, and Rebecca I. Hartman, M.D., M.P.H., from Brigham and Women's Hospital, both in Boston, used data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results program to examine changes in melanoma incidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 76,846 new cases of histologically confirmed first primary in situ or invasive cutaneous melanoma diagnosed between January 2018 and December 2020 were identified. Percentage changes (PC) of incidence rates (per 100,000 person-years) were calculated between 2018 and 2019 and 2019 and 2020.

The researchers found that between 2018 and 2019, in situ melanoma incidence rates were stable. In 2020 versus 2019, significant decreases were observed (PC, −24.52 percent), especially among older, male, and non-Hispanic White individuals (PCs, −27.51, −26.40, and −23.35 percent, respectively). No significant difference was seen in invasive melanoma incidence rates in 2019 versus 2018, but significant decreases occurred in 2020 versus 2019 (PC, −19.51 percent), especially among non-Hispanic White individuals (PC, −18.72 percent). In 2020, significant decreases were seen in the incidence of superficial spreading, T1, nonulcerated, and nonmitogenic melanomas (PCs, −19.56, −25.52, −21.22, and −24.40 percent, respectively). In 2020, a significant decrease was seen in the incidence of stage I melanomas but not other stages (PC, −22.26 percent).

"These findings may reflect decreased skin cancer screening examinations or access to dermatologic care during the pandemic, both of which may lead to reduced melanoma diagnoses," the authors write.

One author reported financial ties to industry.

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