



THE MELANOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

A Non-Profit Organization Founded by Patients and Their Families

Melanoma Fact Sheet

Incidence:

- **Melanoma is in epidemic growth at ~ 3% rise in cases per year**
 - 53,000+ new cases reported yearly / 7800+ deaths yearly
 - Melanoma risk: (1935) 1:1500; (1960) 1:600; (1985) 1:150; (2000) 1:74
- **Fastest growing cancer currently in USA and worldwide**
 - Most common cancer in young adults aged 20-30
 - Currently MORE new cases of melanoma than HIV/AIDS
 - Women age 25-30: melanoma = primary cause of cancer death
 - Women age 30-35: melanoma = #2 cause of death (after breast cancer)
- Melanoma = 5% of all skin cancers / 71% all skin cancer deaths
- Melanoma does occur in ALL age groups – including Pediatric age groups

Causes:

- **Mechanism of initiation of melanoma from normal skin = unknown**
 - No specific genetic locus yet identified
 - Primary skin lesion sometimes never found (or is “amelanotic” = non-pigmented)
 - Multiple risk factors exist for the development of melanoma including:
 - UV exposure (especially 1 or more blistering sunburns in childhood)
 - Moles – especially atypical or dysplastic moles
 - Increase risk if person has greater than 50 moles

Survival: (from AJCC 2002 Revised Melanoma Staging / Survival data)

- **Survival when superficial melanoma is found and diagnosed early**
 - **Diagnosis: in situ melanoma (Stage 0)**
 - 5 year survival = 100%; 10 year survival = 100%
- **Survival when melanoma no longer superficial (Advanced stage melanoma)**
 - **Diagnosis: melanoma in lymph nodes (Stage III disease)**
 - 5 year survival: IIIA (single/multiple nodes + non-ulcerated primary)= 63-69%
 - 5 year survival: IIIC (single/multiple nodes + ulcerated primary) = 24-29%
 - 10 year survival: IIIA = 57-63%; IIIC = 15-24%
 - **Diagnosis: melanoma now disseminated to major organs (Stage IV disease)**
 - 5 year survival: 7-9%; 10 year survival = 3-6%
- **No significant advances in medical therapies (or survival) for patients with advanced melanoma have occurred in the past 30 years**
 - Melanoma currently ranks #8 on the NCI Research Funding for Cancer list



For more information

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