

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

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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.

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