

# Assessment of skin cancer presentation in the South West and Hampshire in 2008

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## Summary

As a result of the National Awareness and Early Diagnosis Initiative's focus on Skin Cancer, skin cancer services in England might require changes in service configuration. The South West Public Health Observatory Skin Cancer Tumour Panel undertook an audit to establish a baseline assessment of the tumours seen by Dermatologists, Plastic Surgeons and Maxillofacial Surgeons in the South West and Hampshire, to gain a better understanding of tumour presentation in their clinics.

All Trusts in the South West and Hampshire were asked to participate in the audit. It was agreed that consultants would include 50 consecutive tumours reviewed in their clinics from June to September 2008. Demographic data, clinical and histological diagnosis were collected.

589 cases were collected. Tumour types included basal cell carcinoma (BCC) (63%, (373/589)) squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) (19% (110/589)) and malignant melanoma (MM) (16% (95/589)). The main findings of the audit were:

- Females tended to present with a history of longer length of symptoms than males but males had larger lesions at presentation.
- Eighteen percent (56/318) of basal cell carcinoma were referred under the 2 week wait urgent referral pathways.
- Younger patients were more likely to be referred under the 2 week wait urgent referral pathways as were females compared to males.
- Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma (68% (327/483)) were mainly located in the head and neck area while malignant melanoma were more common on the trunk area (34% (32/95)).
- Tumour size was an important factor in the early stage of the referral process either in relation to the patient awareness or GP referral process.
- Interestingly basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma required more complex repair as part of the treatment than MM (26%, 35%, and 18% respectively).

Considering the high incidence of Non Melanoma Skin Cancer (basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma) currently presenting in England, these results represent useful findings in terms of costing for service delivery as well as showing age and gender gaps which could be used in awareness campaigns.

The high proportion of basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell Carcinoma requiring complex repair suggests that there is scope for raising awareness to achieve earlier diagnosis.