Health information technology utilization among skin cancer patients

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Patients’ attitudes towards active surveillance for basal cell carcinoma

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Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common cancer in the US. 30-50% of BCCs may be removed surgically, organ by organ by excision or by cryosurgery. Active surveillance, where patients monitor for recurrent disease, is an option for treatment of patients with a low risk of recurrence. In this cohort study, we evaluated the use of active surveillance for BCC management based on Melanoma and Basal Cell Cancer Information (MBCI) and the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (SEER) data. We identified 133,162 patients who underwent surveillance for BCC between 2000-2018. Of these patients, 22% were treated with active surveillance. The median age of patients at diagnosis was 67 years, and the most common location of BCC was the face (45%). Patients treated with active surveillance were more likely to be male (50% vs. 47%) and have a higher income (80% vs. 75%). The proportion of patients treated with active surveillance increased from 15% in 2000-2004 to 24% in 2014-2018. The median time to recurrence for patients treated with active surveillance was 1.5 years, compared to 1.0 years for patients treated with surgery. The results of this study suggest that active surveillance may be an effective alternative to surgical treatment for BCC in certain patients with a low risk of recurrence.