



PRESS RELEASE

EU-Study shows: 30 percent more skin cancer than expected European Skin Cancer Foundation warns against trivialization

Berlin, 13 September 2011. The latest results of the EPIDERM-Study (European Prevention Initiative for Dermatological Malignancies) shows that the number of cases of Non Melanoma Skin Cancer in Europe is about 30 percent higher than previously thought. Meanwhile, Non Melanoma Skin Cancer is the most common cancer of the white world population. In Germany the incidence of the so called "white skin cancer" is increasing annually by five to seven percent. That means 250.000 new cases each year. "Previously the burden for the patients and the health care system had been greatly underestimated due to the insufficient data on non melanoma skin cancers", explains Professor Eggert Stockfleth, leader of the European Skin Cancer Foundation (ESCF). There is a need to develop effective public health strategies to combat the disease at European level. People need information about skin cancer and the best treatment", says Stockfleth.

The data of the EPIDERM-study are supposed to be used for the development of prevention programs and for risk reduction strategies. Therefore, the ESCF starts to train dermatologists from all European countries this year. Known as the "snowball system" these physicians will train other physicians in their own country on the subject of non melanoma skin cancer.

The early detection of non melanoma skin cancer is one of the most important tasks, which dermatologists wish to carry out now. About 13 million German people used the skin cancer screening over the last two years. Germany is the only country where skin cancer screening is a standard benefit of the general health insurances. The screening improves the early diagnosis, avoids complicated operations and reduces the costs of the healthcare system. But most importantly, it reduces the mortality and therefore a lot of lives can be saved.

Skin cancer is the only form of cancer which is visible to the naked eyes. This includes non melanoma skin cancer (basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma) and the malignant melanoma (Black Cancer). Non Melanoma Skin Cancer often occur multiple in sun exposed areas like head, face, lips, hands and forearms. The main risk factor is the ultraviolet sunlight. The ultraviolet (UV) radiation stimulates the pigment formation. The result is a natural skin protection with a tanning effect.

Depending on the skin type, the tanning gives a little protection for sunburn. There are a lot of reasons for a growing UV-Exposition for

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sensitive skins: Outdoor activities become more popular, the desire for travelling in the southern countries and the growing wish to have a natural tanned body.

This year, the ozone layer protecting the earth from dangerous ultraviolet rays was 40 percent thinner than ever before. The radiation being under the ozone hole means an exposure similar to a midsummer day. Therefore, a good sun protection is extremely important.

For this reason, the European Skin Cancer Foundation has made it its task to increase skin cancer awareness.

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