Prevention campaign against skin cancer

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BACKGROUND: The melanoma incidence has increased over recent decades. Educational campaigns aim to encourage protection from the sun and early detection of melanoma. METHODS: During a campaign in Switzerland, information on risk factors, sun protection and melanoma prevention was distributed. 10987 people completed a questionnaire regarding risk factors, and 2746 people were examined by a dermatologist. RESULTS: Men had a higher risk as assessed by skin type, ultraviolet exposure, family history, number of moles and sunburns during childhood. Changes in moles were reported significantly more often by people with: (1). a positive family history (p < 0.0001); (2). multiple moles (p < 0.0001), and (3). sunburns during childhood (p < 0.0001). A precancerous or cancerous condition was suspected in 16% of individuals examined. CONCLUSION: Early detection of melanoma can be achieved by this type of campaign. Primary prevention is a long-term approach and educational efforts targeting risk groups must be continued.

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