

## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 26 November 2019

### New guidelines for Australia's 'national cancer'

Australians with keratinocyte (non-melanoma) skin cancers will benefit from the release of new clinical guidelines launched today, providing the latest advice on prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

The long-awaited new guidelines for the "*Clinical practice guidelines for keratinocyte cancer (basal cell carcinoma and cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma)*" commissioned by the Federal Government's Department of Health has been published online by Cancer Council Australia and endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Keratinocyte skin cancers, including basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), are the most common cancers in Australia, causing an estimated 939,000 treatments each year and 560 deaths. Two in three Australians will be diagnosed with some form of skin cancer (including both melanoma or keratinocyte skin cancer) by the age of 70.

Professor Stephen Shumack, Chair of the Guidelines Working Group said that this was the first-time the guidelines had been updated since 2008 and were designed to summarise the latest evidence for both doctors and specialists.

"All General Practitioners across Australia have a role to play in identifying and treating these common cancers in their day-to-day practice. It's vital they are up to date with the latest procedures and processes to treat these cancers effectively, as well as guidance on when to refer to a specialist."

The new recommendations in the publication include:

- Advice on skin cancer prevention
- Early detection advice for those at higher risk
- New advice on immunotherapy to treat metastatic disease with advanced SCCs
- When and how to use radiotherapy instead of surgery
- The latest radiotherapy technologies (for instance volumetric modulated therapy)
- Advice for patients at very high risk (e.g. organ transplant recipients)
- The use of cryotherapy (which is no longer recommended for BCCs at high risk facial sites)
- Topical treatments and photodynamic therapy
- Considerations for out-of-pocket costs for patients

Professor Shumack said that the publishing of the new guidelines as we come into summer should serve as a timely reminder to all Australians that skin cancer is extremely common, and prevention as well as early detection is vital.

"As well as remembering to protect their skin from harmful UV with clothing, hats, sunscreen, shade and sunglasses, all Australians need to remember to keep a close eye on their skin and head to their doctor if they notice anything unusual. The simple message is don't delay - the evidence clearly shows that the earlier any skin cancer is detected, the more likely it is that will be successfully treated."

**ENDS**

For media enquiries please contact Tegan Brown via the Cancer Council Australia media line (02) 8063 4109 (diverts to mobile outside of business hours) or email [media@cancer.org.au](mailto:media@cancer.org.au)

Access the guidelines here: [https://wiki.cancer.org.au/australia/Guidelines:Keratinocyte\\_carcinoma](https://wiki.cancer.org.au/australia/Guidelines:Keratinocyte_carcinoma)