Trends in incidence of malignant melanoma in the elderly (aged 65+ years) in England, 1971–2010

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Background

- Malignant melanoma is the 5th most common cancer in the UK.

- Over the past four decades, incidence rates of malignant melanoma have increased more than for any other common cancer.

- The highest incidence rates are observed in the elderly aged 65+ years [accounting for about half (49%) of all cases].
Aim

Methods

Population-based national cancer registration data were analysed to determine the incidence of malignant melanoma (ICD-9: 172; ICD-10: C43) by age, gender, morphological sub-type and anatomical site of tumour.
Results
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During the 40-year period, a total of 69,496 cases of malignant melanoma among the elderly aged 65+ years were diagnosed in England (44.7% males, 55.3% females).

The total number of cases increased from 2,023 in 1971-75 (405 cases/year) to 21,132 in 2006-10 (4,226 cases/year).
Results

The incidence rate (per 100,000) increased from 5.1 in 1971-75 to 61.4 in 2006-10 in males (12-fold increase); and from 7.0 to 42.6 in females (6-fold increase).
Incidence rates of malignant melanoma in England, 1971-2010
Conclusions

During the past four decades, there has been a remarkable increase in the incidence of malignant melanoma among the elderly in England.

The largest increase was observed in the malignant melanoma involving the ‘trunk’ in males.

Considering that an estimated 86% of malignant melanoma cases in the UK are linked to the ultraviolet radiation from the sun, effective lifestyle and behaviour change education could have an enormous impact on primary prevention and reducing the incidence of the disease.

The findings are also relevant for the organisation and commissioning of oncology services and resource allocation.
Thank you

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