

The Burden of Skin Cancer Disparities In the Minority Population

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Abstract

Skin cancer is a major health concern in the U.S. Melanoma, a specific type of skin cancer, causes the most deaths due to its ability to spread to other body parts. This particular cancer is caused by sun exposure, among many other things, and can affect nearly anyone of any age. Out of those affected by skin cancer, African-Americans have a higher chance of mortality and the shortest survival rate. These statistics may be due to the fact that structural racism in the U.S. impacts minorities in a manner that causes them to be more likely to present with stage III and IV advanced skin cancer. Ethnic and racial beliefs regarding sun exposure also may play a role, due to sun protection programs being directed toward mostly caucasian people. Approximately 224,080 new cancer cases, and 73,680 deaths are expected to happen among African-American people in 2022. In terms of the 5-year survival rate, a study showed that caucasians had an 84% chance versus African-Americans having a 58.8% chance of survival. More research is necessary to explore the reasons behind inequities in skin care and diagnosis, and also how structural racism plays a role in many urban communities. The accumulative disparities discussed cause a divide within our country by creating unequal treatment of minorities regarding skin care and cancer risk.