

Epidemiology of Cutaneous Malignant Melanoma in Pakistan: Incidence, Clinical Subtypes, Tumor Stage and Localization

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Abstract : Background: The worldwide incidence of cutaneous melanoma (CM) has been on the rise over the past few decades. Primary prevention and early treatment remain the focus of management to reduce the burden of disease. This entails identification of risk factors to prompt early diagnosis. In Pakistan, there is a scarcity of clinico-pathological data relating to cutaneous malignant melanoma. Objective: The purpose of this study was to analyze the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of patients presenting with cutaneous malignant melanoma in Pakistan, and to compare the results with other studies. Method: Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre is currently the only dedicated cancer hospital in the country, accepting patients from all over Pakistan. Majority of the patients, however, belong to the northern half of the country. From the recorded data of the hospital, all cutaneous melanoma cases were identified and evaluated. Results: Between 1997 and 2017, a total of 169 cutaneous melanoma patients were registered at Shaukat Khanum. Mean age was 47.5 years. The highest incidence of melanoma was seen in the age group 40-59 years (n=69, 40.8%). Most commonly reported clinical subtype was unspecified melanoma (n=154, 91%). Amongst those in which T stage was reported, the most frequently observed T-stage at presentation was T4 (n=23, 13.6%). With regards to body distribution, in our study CM was seen most commonly in the lower limb including the hip. The yearly incidence of melanoma has increased/remained stable from 2007 to 2017. Conclusion: cutaneous malignant melanoma is a fairly common disease in Pakistan. Patients tend to present at a more advanced stage as compared to patients in developed countries. Identification of risk factors and tumor characteristics is therefore of paramount importance to deal with these patients.

Keywords : epidemiology of cutaneous malignant melanoma, cutaneous malignant melanoma, Pakistan, skin cancer

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