Melanoma

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Melanoma can develop in an existing mole or look like a new mole (American Academy of Dermatology 2018)

Signs and Symptoms

- Change in existing mole
- New spot or patch on the skin
- A spot that looks like changing freckle/age spot
- Dark streak under fingernail/hair
- Border of darker skin around/finger/foot
- Slowly growing patch of thick skin that looks like a scar

Clinical Manifestations & Staging (American Cancer Society, 2019)

<table>
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<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| I | No spread beyond the skin
| II | Has spread to regional lymph nodes but has not spread to distant sites
| III | Has spread to very small areas of nearby skin. Has not spread to distant sites
| IV | Has spread to one or more lymph nodes OR has spread to distant sites

Implications of Nursing Care

- Routine annual physical exams
- Nears court
- Monitoring suspicious nevi
- In depth familial history
- Routine lab work
- Punch biopsy of any suspicious nevi
- Consult to specialists
- Use of microscope/dermatoscope when evaluating skin lesions
- Use of NEDS and automated diagnostic devices to detect melanoma
- Biopsy for those term cancer patients who present with potential for recurrent or melatoma
- Blind assay for those term cancer patients who present with potential for recurrent or melanoma
- (MITF): microphthalmia antigen homologous protein to detect melanoma
- History of sunburns with blistering
- Education on reducing UV exposure, wearing sunscreen and clothing that covers most of the body
- Education on tanning bed exposure
- Education on smoking cessation
- Emotional support and counseling with a genetic counselor
- Education on best treatment options for metastatic melanoma
- Education for end patients who care for melanoma survivors
- Referral to support groups and websites
- Educational and research initiatives for end patients

Conclusion

Melanoma is a very treatable cancer if diagnosis and treatment are in the early stages. In 2014 an estimate of nearly 76,100 new cases of melanoma of the skin will be diagnosed and about 9,710 will die due to the disease within the year (Liu et al, 2014). This makes melanomas one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States. The pathology of melanoma is complex and has a number of known causes. The diagnosis and early detection here have become very specific. Discovering the specific markers and mutations of melanoma can allow for early detection and eliminate the amount of cytotoxic treatment a patient must receive (Liu et al, 2014).

The practitioner must focus efforts for education and awareness of the disease and make it community aware. The cost for treating melanoma has increased significantly over the past few years. The patients with melanoma must be monitored. The early diagnosis and treatment will decrease morbidity and mortality rate as well as decrease unnecessary treatment.