



Effective Health Care

Comparative Effectiveness of Treatments for Non-melanoma Skin Cancer Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- *Comparative Effectiveness of Treatments for Non-melanoma Skin Cancer* will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator asserts that there is a recent trend towards treating non-melanoma skin cancer with radiation therapy as opposed to surgery, which may have led to unnecessary cost increases, and may not be associated with improved patient outcomes. The nominator hopes that an AHRQ product could provide clarity on the comparative risks and benefits of treating non-melanoma skin cancer with radiation as compared to surgery, in order to improve Medicare contractors' decision making as well as patient care.

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Population(s): Adult patients with non-melanoma skin cancer

Intervention(s): Surgery, external beam radiation, brachytherapy, systemic chemotherapy, topical medications (including topical chemotherapeutic agents), combination therapies, observation

Comparator(s): Those listed above (i.e., compared to each other)

Outcome(s): Morbidity, mortality, hospitalizations, occurrence of adverse events, recurrence, repeated treatment, disfigurement, incidence of other cancers, functioning, and quality of life

Key Questions from Nominator: For adult patients (especially the elderly) with non-melanoma skin cancers, what are the comparative risks and benefits of treatment with surgical excision as compared to treatment with radiation (either external beam or brachytherapy), systemic chemotherapy, topical medications (including topical chemotherapeutic agents), combination therapies, and observation?

Considerations

- Non-melanoma skin cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer and encompasses several types. The condition affects millions of patients annually in the United States. There are a variety of treatment options for non-melanoma skin cancer including curative or palliative surgical excision, external beam radiation, brachytherapy, systemic chemotherapy, topical medications (including topical chemotherapeutic agents), combination therapies, and observation.
- Although our search identified systematic reviews that address different treatment options for non-melanoma skin cancer, none comprehensively addressed the comparative effectiveness of different treatments. We also identified a sufficient literature base to support a new systematic review.