

Melanoma is the most dangerous type of skin cancer and is the leading cause of death from cutaneous malignancy. The incidence of melanoma in the United States is increasing exponentially with melanoma increasing in men and women more rapidly than any other malignancy. Mills-Peninsula Health Services (MPHS) has been serving the community with regard to this disease by using a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach by Surgical Oncology and Dermatology, to aggressively treat patients affected by this disease.

In 2006, physicians at MPHS cared for 65 patients with melanoma. The majority of patients presented with early stage melanoma; 48% of patients had stage 0 disease and 34% had stage I disease. Five percent of patients presented with stage II disease, and one person presented with stage IV disease. Most of these patients had surgery for their melanoma. Twenty-three percent of patients underwent local tumor excision, and 45% had biopsy followed by gross excision of the primary tumor. Only 20% of patients underwent wide local excision with appropriate margins, depending on the depth of the primary tumor. The overall five-year survival of patients with stage 0 disease was 77% and for stage I disease was 91%.

In 2008, physicians at MPHS cared for 85 patients with melanoma, a 31% increase over two years. Again, most patients presented with early stage melanoma; 52% of patients had stage 0 disease and 36% had stage I disease. Four percent of patients presented with stage II disease, 2% with stage III disease, and 2% with stage IV disease. Sixteen percent of patients underwent local tumor excision, and 16% had biopsy followed by gross excision of the primary tumor. In 2008, 61% of patients were treated with wide-reexcision of the primary tumor after being diagnosed with melanoma; this standard-of-care surgical treatment for melanoma represents a 205% increase in two years. The overall two-year survival of these patients is as follows: stage 0 disease 95%, stage I disease 90%, stage II disease 67%, stage III disease 100%, and stage IV disease 33%. This approach has been facilitated by the presence of a multidisciplinary tumor board as well as fellowship-trained surgical oncologists who are specifically trained in the care of patients with melanoma.

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