2020 Melanoma Mortality Rates Decreasing Despite Ongoing Increase in Incidence

The new report from the American Cancer Society shows that melanoma is the fifth most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States among both men and women.

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By Marc Hurlbert, PhD, MRA chief science officer

Each January, the American Cancer Society (ACS) releases updated estimates about trends in new cancer cases and deaths in its annual report, Cancer Facts and Figures. This report highlights the estimated incidence (number of new cases), prevalence (number of people alive today with a history of cancer), and survival statistics for cancer in the United States. Importantly, the report tracks trends over time — allowing us to monitor the impact of improvements to prevention and treatment approaches.

2020 Melanoma Facts and Figures:

- In 2020 in the US, an estimated 100,350 new cases of invasive melanoma will be diagnosed, impacting 60,190 men and 40,160 women; and
- In 2020 in the US, an estimated 6,850 deaths from melanoma are expected, comprised of 4,610 men and 2,240 women.

This data is incredibly useful for understanding how rates of melanoma shift over time and how melanoma research and new treatment options — such as advances in immunotherapy and targeted therapy — may be improving patient survival and outcomes across the entire population, not just in clinical trials.

Over the last five years of available data (2013 – 2017), melanoma death rates declined dramatically:

- An average of 7% per year decline in deaths for adults younger than 50; and
- An average of 5.7% per year decline in deaths for adults older than 50.

These data suggest that the numerous new treatments for melanoma approved over the last decade appear to be improving survival, and reducing mortality rates across the population. However, with an estimated 6,850 deaths this year from melanoma, more research is still urgently needed to develop new treatment options that benefit all patients.

Understanding the urgent need for new melanoma treatments, MRA has invested more than 89% of its research funding to date into the discovery and development of new treatment options, including over 100 unique treatment approaches.

The new report from ACS shows that melanoma is the fifth most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States among both men and women. The 30-year trend of increasing melanoma incidence stands in sharp contrast to the dramatic decrease — over the last five years — in melanoma mortality and highlights the impact of transformational investments by MRA and others in melanoma treatment science. It also underscores the reasoning for MRA's increased focus on melanoma prevention and early detection research in its overall grant portfolio — including the creation of the MRA Dermatology Fellowship program.

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