

Do biopsies reveal evidence of prevention of pedal melanoma with footwear in a developing community?

Abstract

Early publication on melanoma among the Igbos of Nigeria in the 1970s suggested that shoe wearing will lessen the occurrence of pedal melanoma. Therefore, this study has set out to examine the 1980s and 1990s biopsy series in order to discover any positive change. Surprisingly, in terms of the total cases and the male/sex comparison, there is no evidence of decrease in incidence.

Keywords: melanoma, sole, incidence, footwear, no progress

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Introduction

In 1975, the author examined at a Regional Reference Laboratory established by the Eastern Nigerian Government at the capital, Enugu, the biopsies received from February 1970 to July 1974 inclusive, totaling approximately 5,000 biopsies.¹ Of this number, 21 cases of malignant melanoma were obtained. As the site of predilection was the sole of the foot, it was hypothesized that the role of the hot soils and stones of Africa in the bare foot should be considered.² Accordingly, the series covering the 1980s and 1990s were examined to see whether there was any positive trend.

Investigation

The records kept by the author were searched with reference to the 1980s and 1990s as regards age and sex parameters (Table 1).

Table 1 Epidemiological data on sex and age

Age groups	1980s		1990s		Totals
	M	F	M	F	
< 40	3	1	1	1	12
41 - 50	3	4	2	3	36
51 - 60	9	9	13	5	26
61 - 70	7	8	5	6	5
71+	1	-	1	3	85
Totals	23	22	22	18	85
	45		40		85

Results & discussion

The expectation was that fewer cases would be recorded with the years. However, there is no significant difference. In other words, this method shows no evidence of prevention during the two periods recorded. Perhaps, there may be another way of determining matters.

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Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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