

A New World Record

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Skin cancer screening is the most commonly identified form of public service provided by the dermatology community and certainly the most valuable public service. Free screenings offer the public access to a full cutaneous examination, regardless of their insurance or economic status. In addition, free screenings attract people who otherwise might not make a standard appointment to see a dermatologist. Skin cancer screenings are becoming more essential as the incidence of these malignancies increases.

The 2006 skin cancer fact sheet presents trends observed by the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD).¹ More than 1 million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year.² An estimated 10,710 people will die from skin cancer this year (7910 from melanoma and 2800 from other skin cancers).² There will be about 111,900 new cases of melanoma in 2006—49,710 in situ (noninvasive) and 62,190 invasive (34,260 men and 27,930 women).² This is more than a 9% increase in new cases of melanoma from 2005. In 2006, at current rates, 1 in 32 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing melanoma and 1 in 60 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing invasive melanoma. One American dies of melanoma almost every hour (every 67 minutes).³ The incidence of melanoma has increased 690% from 1950 to 2001, and the overall mortality rate increased 165% during this same period.³ Melanoma is the second most common cancer in women aged 20 to 29 years.⁴

The editors and staff of *Cutis*[®] would like to commend the AAD for its recent efforts to expand the scope of skin cancer screenings. On May 6, the AAD attempted to set a Guinness World Record for the most skin cancer screenings in a single day. (At the time this editorial was written, the final outcome was unknown.) The focus of this effort was to generate media interest and increase public awareness of the importance of early detection and prevention of skin cancer.

During the screenings, patients filled out a Guinness World Record authorization form, a unique document for this record-setting attempt. Because the AAD had to provide the Guinness organization with a total count of patients screened, this authorization form permitted the release of the full name and location of patients to Guinness.

The AADs melanoma/skin cancer screening program has been a tremendous success. Since 1985, the program has screened more than 1.5 million people and detected more than 135,300 suspicious lesions, including more than 15,600 suspected melanomas.⁵ We should be proud of this accomplishment, but we need to do even more. Let us challenge ourselves to set a new world record every year.

REFERENCES

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