Melanoma Incidence Climbs Quickly Between 1992 and 2004

BY KATE JOHNSON

MONTREAL — The incidence of melanoma in the United States increased rapidly over a 10-year period, regardless of tumor thickness and socioeconomic status, reported Dr. Eleni Linos.

“This has implications for preventive screening and primary care,” she said at the annual meeting of the Society for Investigative Dermatology. Dr. Linos and her co-investigators examined data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) registry between 1992 and 2004. (J. Invest. Derm. 2009 Jan. 8 [doi:10.1038/jid.2008.423].) They focused on non-Hispanic white patients, in whom 90% of melanomas occur, said Dr. Linos, who declared having no conflicts of interest. They identified 70,596 cases.

During the study period, the incidence of melanoma of all thicknesses increased from 18 per 100,000 in 1992 to 26 per 100,000 in 2000—an annual increase of 4.3%. Dr. Linos said that the public has more confidence in dermatologists and plastic surgeons ranking the highest. The dermatology clinic patients’ mean score for plastic surgeons was 5.91, compared with 5.48 for the students. Derm clinic patients’ mean score for dermatologists was 5.91, compared with 5.28 as signed by the students.

“While our study supports our suspicion that the public has more confidence in the brand ‘plastic surgery’ than the brand ‘dermatology’ when it comes to cutaneous surgeries,” he said. This was especially surprising since it came from patients in the dermatology clinic. On the other hand, patients were able to be objective when they evaluated the scars.

Students should be required to spend at least a day in the operating room to see what Mohs surgery is, and dermatologic surgeons should continue to “promote our reputation as the experts for skin surgeries,” he said.