

PARTNERS DIRECT APR 08

Skin Cancer Clinic

Although the incidence of skin cancer in Singapore is not as high as in countries with Caucasian populations, skin cancer is nevertheless the 7th most common cancer in Singapore. As our population ages, the incidence of skin cancer is expected to climb.

Skin cancer, especially if treatment is delayed, can cause significant disfiguring local destruction. It may even be life-threatening. Fortunately, paralleling progress in other branches of medicine, there are now newer and better modalities of treatment of skin cancers.

National Skin Centre has started a **weekly Skin Cancer Clinic** to coordinate the care of patients diagnosed with skin cancer. The main objective of the Skin Cancer Clinic is to formulate individualised treatment for patients with skin cancers. The aim is to achieve the best cure rate, with the least tissue destruction, and at the most cost-effective manner.

Individualised treatment begins with arranging for the relevant investigations to determine the extent and spread of the tumour. Treatment proper then depends on the type, extent of involvement and location of the skin cancer. Superficial tumours can be, if considered appropriate, treated in the clinic with cryotherapy or topical anti-tumour medication, eg Imiquimod or Photodynamic therapy.

For more penetrant or aggressive skin cancers, the Skin Cancer Clinic will coordinate the care with links to:

1. The Dermatological Surgery and Laser Unit, NSC which can undertake tumour extirpation via curettage and cautery, conventional surgery, laser surgery and Mohs micrographic surgery
2. Plastic surgeons and Oculoplastic surgeons
3. Radiotherapists
4. Oncologists

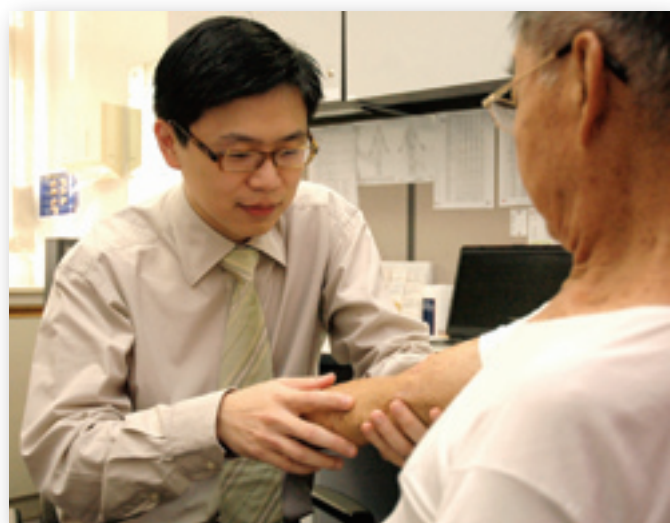
Another important objective of the Skin Cancer Clinic is to coordinate follow-up management of patients. The aim is early detection of recurrence, as well as secondary prevention.

An important group of patients needing careful consideration are patients prone to skin cancers, eg patients exposed to arsenic in the past, patients with familial skin cancer syndromes and increasingly, patients rendered immunosuppressed.

To facilitate early treatment and for the convenience of both patients and GPs, the Skin Cancer Clinic encourages direct referral into the clinic, which runs **weekly on Thursdays**, of patients with biopsy proven skin cancers. Patients who are clinically suspected of skin cancers, but have not been biopsy proven, will continue to be attended to in NSC's General clinics.

For enquiries, please call Tel: 6350 6600

This article is contributed by Dr Ng See Ket, Senior Consultant Dermatologist National Skin Centre



Dr Melvin Ee, Consultant, examining a patient's skin condition

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