

Skin cancer care at the end of life

Optimising quality of life

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Common clinical scenario

Patient A



Patient B



Life expectancy is more than age

Patient A



Patient B



Medical decisions at the end of life are challenging

- Prostate cancer screening
- Surgery in the last year of life (>30%)
- Routine screening in patients with metastatic cancer (8-15% mammography, PSA screening in patients with advanced lung or pancreatic cancer)

Decisions at the end of life

How much will it help?

Decisions for Older Adults

How much will it help?

When will it help?

Decisions for Older Adults

How much will it help?

When will it help?

Time lag to benefit:

Statin therapy: 0.5 years

Colorectal cancer screening: 10.7 years

Mohs for an asymptomatic BCC: ?

JAMA Walter 2013

Our question:

How are we treating patients with BCC who have limited life expectancy, and may not live long enough to benefit from treatment?

(in the United States)

Prospective Cohort Study of 1536 patients (1993 tumors) with BCC and SCC

Age: mean 68 years

Gender: 75% male

Prior skin cancer: 58%

Treatment site: 48% SF VA

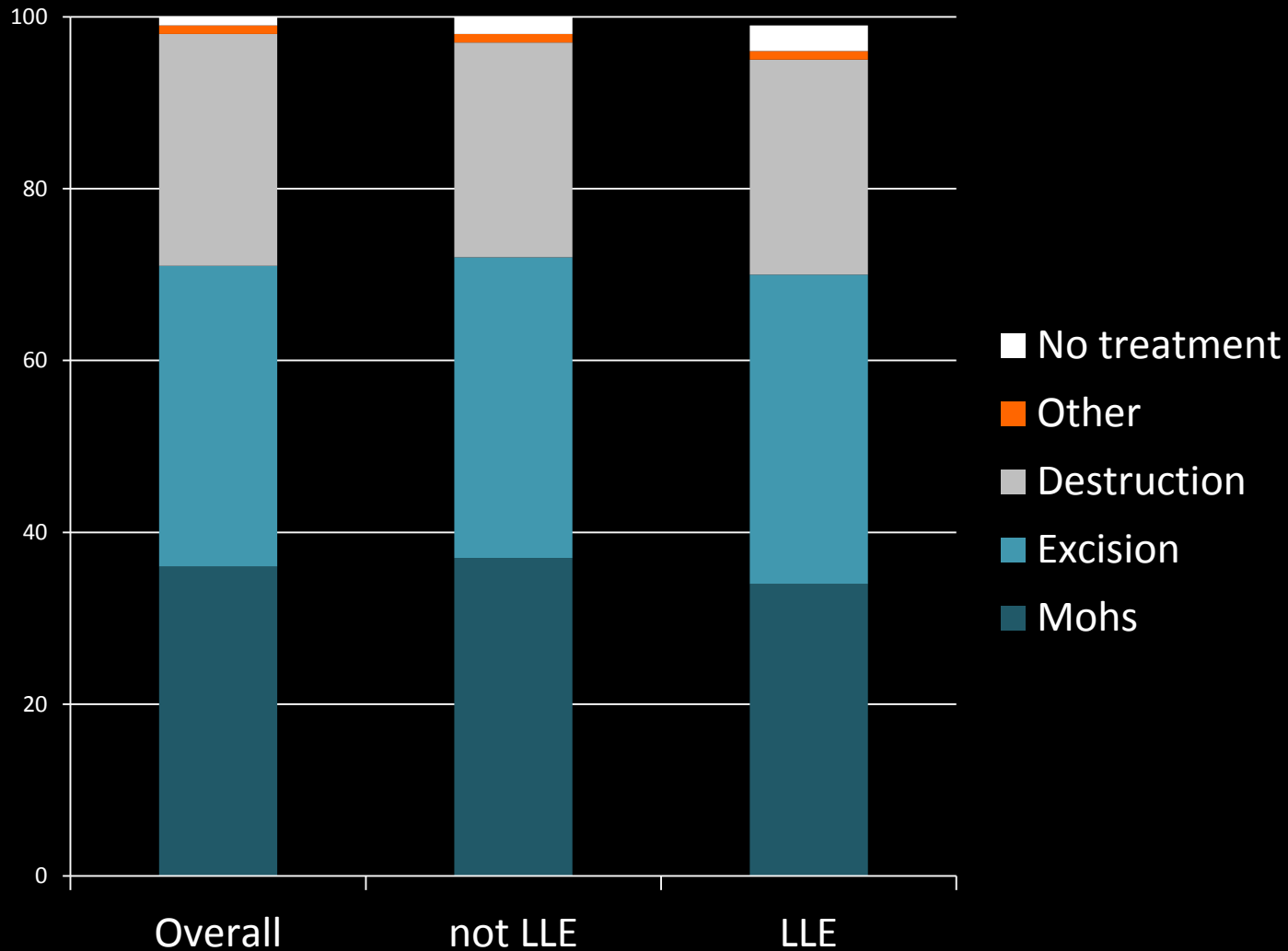
Limited Life expectancy

Patients older than 85 years

Multiple comorbidities (Charlson score ≥ 3)

Patients who died within 2 years of treatment

BCC and SCC treatment by life expectancy



Patient reported problems after skin surgery

- 27% (236 of 866 patients) reported a problem
 - 38% were moderately, very or extremely severe
 - 52% were medical complications
- 14% (123 of 866 patients) reported a medical complication

Summary

- Most BCCs and SCCs are treated with surgery in the US
- Treatment choices are not affected by life expectancy even when adjusting for patient and tumor characteristics, and regardless of how life expectancy is defined
- Over a quarter of patients report a problem after skin surgery

Conclusion

It is unclear if every patient will live long enough to benefit from surgery

Patients in the US, including those at the end of life, are currently not given choices on treatment of BCC

88 year-old patient with an asymptomatic 5mm pearly papule with telangectasias on back

What is the patient's life expectancy?

eprognosis.ucsf.edu

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More than 1 year

Less than 1 year

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Discuss likely diagnosis,
prognosis, advise biopsy
and treatment

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High risk tumor?

Low risk tumor?

Discuss risks benefits of all management options including **active surveillance**

Active Surveillance

for asymptomatic BCC at the end of life

Photograph

Measure

Follow up patient in 3 months

Acknowledgements

- Mary-Margaret Chren, MD
- Tim Berger, MD
- Rupa Parvataneni, MS
- Sarah E. Stuart
- Dominick Frosch PhD
- W. John Boscardin, PhD
- C. Seth Landefeld, MD
- Ken Covinsky MD, MPH
- Louise Walter MD
- UCSF KL2 Scholars Program
- NIAMS
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Dermatology Foundation
- American Skin Association

Thank you