

ABSTRACT

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF CAUCASIAN AND HISPANIC PARENTS REGARDING MELANOMA DETECTION AND PREVENTION

The incidence of melanoma is increasing for Caucasians and Hispanics in California. To date, public health outreach and research about melanoma have focused primarily on Caucasians. This thesis compares the knowledge and practices of Caucasian and Hispanic parents on early melanoma detection and prevention.

Parents of 300 patients in two clinic settings answered a 21-item questionnaire. The data indicate more Caucasian parents knew about melanoma and they more commonly applied sunscreen of Sun Protective Factor (SPF) 15 or greater as sun protection. Caucasian parents are also more likely to apply sunscreen to their children. In contrast, Hispanic parents knew less about melanoma, but nonetheless avoided sun exposure. Their children more commonly stayed in the shade and limited their sun exposure.

The Hispanics surveyed had less awareness of melanoma than did the Caucasians. Further, neither group utilized all the available sun protective practices. Future public health promotions should address these deficiencies.

Shanna Leora Treanor
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