

Survey estimates one fifth of melanomas undiagnosed during Covid-19 pandemic

Comparison with World Health Organization incidence rates suggest 14,944 early-stage melanomas were undiagnosed in the United States. Lockdowns and pressure on healthcare systems result in one third of skin check appointments being missed. The Global Coalition for Melanoma Patient Advocacy launches innovative skin check Alexa & Google apps and instructional video to encourage self-examinations.

WASHINGTON ([PRWEB](#)) January 27, 2021 -- A recent survey of over 700 dermatologists around the world has revealed the shocking impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the detection of melanoma skin cancer. Compared to a normal year of performing patient skin examinations, dermatologists estimate that one fifth (21%) of melanomas may have gone undiagnosed in 2020, with one third (33.6%) of appointments missed due to the pandemic.

When these figures are considered alongside the World Health Organization's (WHO) most recent melanoma incidence rates, the survey suggests that over 60,000 melanomas have gone undiagnosed worldwide, and 14,944 undiagnosed here in the United States.

“The lockdowns that have been necessary during the COVID-19 crisis, coupled with the additional strain on healthcare systems, have led to a worrying proportion of professional skin checks being missed. So, with this trend set to continue until we all emerge from the pandemic, it has never been more important for people to check their own skin for melanoma,” said Kyleigh LiPira, MBA, CEO of the [Melanoma Research Foundation](#).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Global Coalition for Melanoma Patient Advocacy](#) – the alliance of melanoma-related charitable organizations behind the survey – has launched two skin self-exam tools:

A voice-activated digital assistant ‘Skin Check’ app – Available on both Amazon’s Alexa and the Google Assistant platforms, the app guides people through what to look for, and the seven steps for conducting a full-body skin exam. The assistant also offers the ability to set a recurring monthly reminder for the exam. Once enabled, users can simply ask Alexa or Google: “Open Skin Check.”

A skin self-exam video – Similar in scope to the app, the video covers the [ABCDEs](#) warning signs of melanoma, and the seven steps for checking the body. Pauses between the seven steps have been included in the film, so that the viewer can simply take their phone or tablet into a bathroom, hit play, and follow the instructions in real time.

To activate and use the app, people should go to <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08GLPWPX5/>, and the video is available at <https://youtu.be/WWAPxLF1vdk>.

“In the fight against melanoma, early detection and treatment is critical. Both the voice-activated app and the video are free to use, so we encourage everybody to find just 10 minutes each month and make conducting a skin self-exam part of their regular routine,” added LiPira.

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About the Global Coalition for Melanoma Patient Advocacy:

The Global Coalition for Melanoma Patient Advocacy was formed in 2014 by the Melanoma Research Foundation in response to the global need to bring the patient voice to the melanoma space.

The group has grown to include organizations from 27 different countries and is enthusiastically supported by its partners around the world, as well as the global patient, healthcare and pharmaceutical communities. The Coalition meets the vital needs of the worldwide melanoma community through three working groups, which each specializing in a unique area that addresses globally relevant issues for melanoma patients, encompassing:

- Melanoma Awareness and Patient Resources
- Patient Advocacy and Access to Treatment
- Collaboration and Recruitment

The Global Coalition for Melanoma Patient Advocacy meets annually and is determined to make the deadliest skin cancer curable through its worldwide partnership. For more information or with questions about the Global Coalition, email global@melanoma.org.

About the survey

The short survey was conducted in November and December 2020, receiving a total of 734 responses from professional dermatologists across 36 countries. Dermatologists were asked to estimate the proportion of skin check appointments missed due to the pandemic and estimate the proportion of undiagnosed melanomas compared to a normal year.

Survey Summary:

Did the pandemic limit your ability to perform in-person skin checks during the pandemic?

Yes = 72.48% No = 27.52%

What proportion of skin checks do estimate have been missed as a result of the Covid pandemic?
33.73

What do you think is the reason for these missed skin checks?

Your practice/clinic was closed = 27.93% Patients were reluctant to come in = 72.07%

Compared to the number of melanoma you diagnose in a normal year, what proportion do you think have gone undiagnosed due to the pandemic?
20.87

What proportion of skin checks do estimate have been missed as a result of the Covid pandemic?	Frequency	Mid-point	Freq. x mid-point
0 - 10%	99	5	495
11% - 20%	125	15.5	1,938
21% - 30%	142	25.5	3,621
31% - 40%	127	35.5	4,509
41% - 50%	95	45.5	4,323
51% - 60%	54	55.5	2,997
61% - 70%	37	65.5	2,424
71% - 80%	34	75.5	2,567
81% - 90%	12	85.5	1,026
91% - 100%	9	95.5	860
	734		24,758
	Proportion of missed skin checks =		33.73

Compared to the number of melanoma you diagnose in a normal year, what proportion do you think have gone undiagnosed due to the pandemic?	Frequency	Mid-point	Freq. x mid-point
0 - 10%	270	5	1,350
11% - 20%	183	15.5	2,837
21% - 30%	112	25.5	2,856
31% - 40%	65	35.5	2,308
41% - 50%	46	45.5	2,093
51% - 60%	24	55.5	1,332
61% - 70%	15	65.5	983
71% - 80%	10	75.5	755
81% - 90%	5	85.5	428
91% - 100%	4	95.5	382
	734		15,322
	Proportion of missed skin checks =		20.87

COUNTRY	CONTINENT	2018 WHO data		Covid survey data
		Melanoma skin cancer INCIDENCE	Melanoma skin cancer MORTALITY	Estimated number of melanoma missed due to Covid-19 pandemic
World	N/A	287,723	60,712	60,192
Argentina	Americas	1,703	592	356
Brasil	Americas	7,407	2,078	1,550
Canada	Americas	8,186	1,242	1,713
Mexico	Americas	3,079	734	644
United States	Americas	71,434	9,491	14,944
Uruguay	Americas	258	81	54
Tasmania	Asia & Oceania	No data available	No data available	No data available
Australia	Asia & Oceania	14,260	1,602	2,983
Japan	Asia & Oceania	1,818	651	380
Albania	Europe	69	24	14
Armenia	Europe	No data available	No data available	No data available
Austria	Europe	2,102	362	440
Belarus	Europe	848	269	177
Belgium	Europe	3,532	464	739
Bosnia	Europe	234	88	49
Bulgaria	Europe	530	228	111
Croatia	Europe	597	221	125
Cyprus	Europe	No data available	No data available	No data available
Czech Republic	Europe	2,451	397	513
Denmark	Europe	2,564	316	536
Estonia	Europe	236	62	49
Georgia	Europe	No data available	No data available	No data available
Germany	Europe	31,432	3,641	6,576
Greece	Europe	1,664	351	348
Hungary	Europe	1,724	351	361
Ireland	Europe	1,205	169	252
Italy	Europe	12,299	2,314	2,573
Latvia	Europe	213	78	45
Lithuania	Europe	461	100	96
Luxemburg	Europe	147	18	31
Macedonia	Europe	221	74	46
Malta	Europe	59	12	12
Montenegro	Europe	26	10	5
Norway	Europe	2,692	377	563
Netherlands	Europe	8,310	906	1,738
Poland	Europe	3,723	1,728	779
Portugal	Europe	1,320	356	276
Romania	Europe	1,107	438	232
Russia	Europe	10,930	4,010	2,287
Serbia	Europe	1,238	412	259
Slovakia	Europe	794	277	166
Slovenia	Europe	682	131	143
Spain	Europe	5,319	1,171	1,113
Sweden	Europe	4,306	562	901
Switzerland	Europe	3,147	391	658
Turkey	Europe	No data available	No data available	No data available
Ukraine	Europe	3,853	1,389	806
United Kingdom	Europe	17,852	2,764	3,735

**Contact Information****Ivis Alfaro**

Melanoma Research Foundation

<http://www.melanoma.org>

+1 (202) 742-5902

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