

# The Incidence of Melanoma by Country of Birth in South Australia

## International perspective

*Is melanoma more common in Australia than in other countries?*

Data from 153 cancer registries around the world in 1990 show that:

- ❖ Australia and New Zealand had the highest incidence of invasive melanoma while Asia and Africa had the lowest rates.
- ❖ The incidence in Australia and New Zealand was three times higher than for Northern Europe and North America ( see figure 1).

## National perspective

*How does the incidence of melanoma in South Australia compare with that in other states in Australia?*

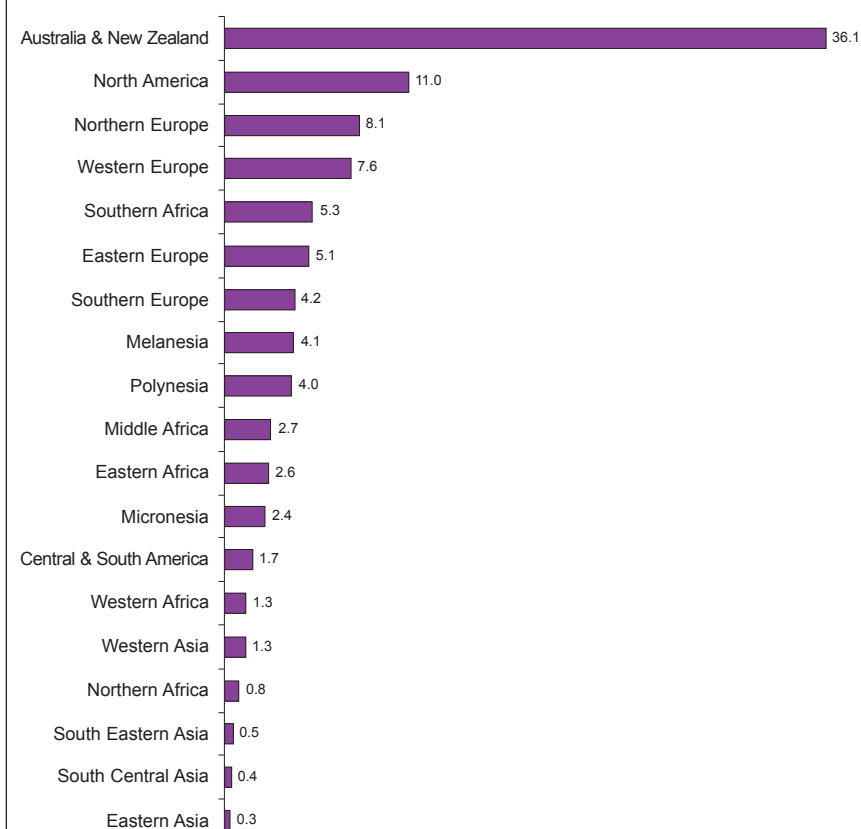
- ❖ South Australia had the 4th highest rate of melanoma in Australia after Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.

## Incidence in South Australia by country of birth

*Do people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups in South Australia have a higher or lower incidence of invasive melanoma?*

- ❖ In 1977-2000, Australian-born people living in South Australia had an incidence of invasive melanoma about 2.4 times that of overseas-born residents.
- ❖ In particular, they had a higher incidence than residents from: Germany, the United Kingdom/Ireland, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe and Asia/the Middle East.

Figure 1 Estimated age-standardized (World Population) incidence of invasive cutaneous melanoma per 100,000 population for the year 2000\*

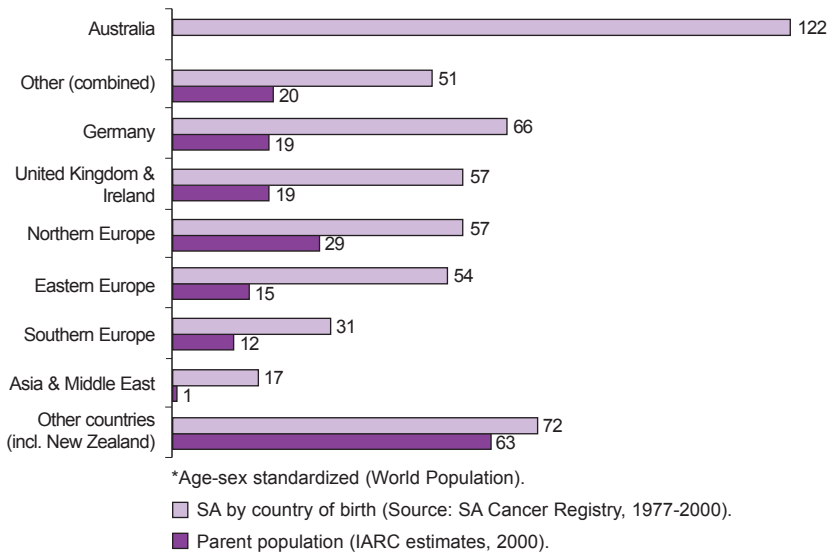


\*Data Source: International Agency for research on Cancer.

*Is there a difference between the incidence of melanoma among CALD residents in South Australia and that in their country of birth?*

- ❖ Overseas born residents in South Australia had a significantly higher incidence than that in their parent populations (see figure 2).

Figure 2 Incidence of invasive melanoma by country of birth in South Australia, compared with the incidence in parent populations  
 - South Australian rates used as the reference (reference set at "100")\*



## A role for General Practitioners

*How can General Practitioners assist in reducing the incidence of melanoma in South Australia?*

- ❖ **Encourage** all your patients to be SunSmart irrespective of cultural background.
- ❖ **Support** the CALD community in their traditional lifestyle and clothing choices that may protect them from over exposure to the sun.
- ❖ **Be aware** of the importance of early detection of all melanomas, including those who appear to be diagnosed at a later stage i.e. Southern and Eastern European people.

- ❖ Migrant groups had incidence rates that were significantly higher than those in their parent population. This would suggest that migrants living in South Australia have a higher risk presumably due to excess sun exposure and possibly the adoption of Australian lifestyle behaviours.

Australia	4720	(84.0%)
UK and Ireland	497	(8.8%)
Italy	74	(1.3%)
Germany	58	(1.0%)
Holland	39	(0.7%)
Other	232	(4.1%)

### Places of birth of South Australian people diagnosed with invasive melanoma, 1977-2000

## Early detection

*Is there a difference in the stage of diagnosis between Australian-born residents and those born overseas?*

- ❖ There is evidence to suggest that fewer melanomas are found when still thin (<0.75mm) among residents born in Southern and Eastern Europe than among the Australian-born.

- ❖ **Display** pictorial SunSmart flyers in your waiting room. These are available from The Cancer Council South Australia.
- ❖ **Raise awareness** of the availability of free telephone interpreter services for CALD patients seeking advice from the Cancer Help Line on 13 11 20.
- ❖ **Access** information sheets about skin cancer in 19 CALD languages from the following website: <http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au>
- ❖ **Encourage** your staff to promote SunSmart practice.
- ❖ **Raise awareness** of the availability of trained speakers from The Cancer Council South Australia who can present SunSmart information to different CALD groups. (Contact Pam Bekkers on 8291 4157)

## Summary

- ❖ South Australia and Australia & New Zealand had a high incidence of invasive melanoma, about three times the rate observed in North America and higher again than seen in other regions of the world.
- ❖ South Australia had the 4th highest rate of melanoma in Australia after Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.
- ❖ Australian-born residents in South Australia had an incidence of invasive melanoma more than twice as high as overseas-born residents.
- ❖ Overseas born residents in South Australia had a significantly higher incidence of invasive melanoma than those in their parent populations.
- ❖ There is evidence to suggest that fewer melanomas are found when still thin among residents born in Southern and Eastern Europe than among the Australian-born.

## For free resources and further information about the SunSmart program contact:

### The Cancer Council South Australia

PO Box 929

Unley SA 5061

Phone: (08) 8291 4111

Fax: (08) 8291 4268

Website: [www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au)

Email: [tcc@cancersa.org.au](mailto:tcc@cancersa.org.au)

### Cancer Help Line

13 11 20



Wear a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses.



Slip on a long sleeved shirt, preferably with a high collar.



Liberaly apply SPF 30+ sunscreen **before** going into the sun and reapply regularly. You need about one teaspoonsful of sunscreen to cover your face, neck and ears.



Use shade as much as possible. Bring an umbrella!

*The South Australian cancer data presented in this fact sheet were extracted from annual reports published by the SA Cancer Registry, plus a supplementary data output from the Dept of Human Services, for the 1977-2000 period. We also acknowledge the contribution of Associate Professor David Roder, Centre for Cancer Control Research, The Cancer Council South Australia.*

