

Association between: gender, timing of diagnosis and morbidity for patients with cutaneous malignant melanoma.

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INTRODUCTION

Background: Although malignant cutaneous melanoma is not the most common skin malignancy, it is the major cause for skin cancer-related deaths. Early diagnosis of melanoma and its adequate surgical treatment leads to an excellent prognosis. In the past decade increased attention has been given to gender disparities in diagnosis, treatment and outcome for melanoma patients. Gender is an important independent prognostic factor: according to studies all over the world In relation to men, women present earlier with undiagnosed tumors, which leads to earlier diagnosis of less severe tumors, higher survival rates and lower mortality rates. Better understanding of the differences in diagnostic time associated with gender could improve melanoma-associated mortality rates and target the differences in populations in order to promote early diagnosis.

Objective: To assess the impact of gender related differences in early diagnosis and approach to treatment in melanoma patients

METHOD

A retrospective study on patients diagnosed with malignant melanoma between the years 2012-2016 in Meir Medical Center. The data was collected from: existing data-base, patients files via computerized 'Ofek' program and via telephone survey.

RESULTS

288 patients were included in the study. 58% of patients were men and the mean age of the patients was 66 years (21-93 years). A significant positive correlation was found between female gender and MM in-situ at age group less than 60 years, as 40.5% of the women diagnosed with melanoma in-situ, in contrast to 18.2% of men (Pv=0.023). Significantly, more Women self-recognized the lesion than men (48.3%, 27.4%, respectively. Pv<0.01). Most men who deliberately approached doctor's examination of the lesion went due to spouse or physician concern (61.2%) were as only 38.8% went deliberately to check a suspicious pigmented lesion. Posterior back and Head and Neck are the most common sites of MM (33.7%, 20.5% respectively). The majority of men MM were in unseen places, especially posterior trunk and Head and neck (31.9%, 31.0%, respectively). Limbs were women common place to found MM (48.4%), most of them (57.6%) visible. Although without significant correlation, women tend to approach doctor examination more quickly than men as reflected by shorter time to treat for women under 60 yrs (146 days, 254 days, respectively). We found no significant association between melanoma thickness and reported time to diagnosis.

DISCUSSION

It was found that gender plays a significant independent role in the diagnosis of melanoma as more women self-recognized the lesion than men and had a less severe melanoma under the age of 60. Unlike the self-awareness of women, most men who deliberately approached doctor's examination of the lesion went due to spouse or physician concern. We also found A significant positive correlation between lesion visibility and self-recognition. The majority of melanoma in men were in unseen places which correlate with delayed diagnosis



CONCLUSIONS

It was found that gender plays a significant independent role in the diagnosis of melanoma as more women self-recognized the lesion than men