

Standing Committee on Screening

Screening and early detection of skin cancer: Statement

The Standing Committee on Screening endorses Cancer Council Australia's position statement on *Screening and early detection of skin cancer*. A copy of Cancer Council Australia's position statement is available on the [Cancer Council Australia website](#).

General principles have been developed as criteria for screening programs by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Australian Population Based Screening Framework (the Framework) has been developed based on these principles. The Framework highlights the need for a strong evidence base in making the decision to introduce a screening program and highlights the requirement that the screening program should offer more benefit than harm to the target population.

Screening for melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers does not meet the WHO criteria for the implementation of population-based screening.

In Cancer Council Australia's statement (endorsed by the Australasian College of Dermatologists) it:

- Does not recommend mass or population-based screening for:
 - non-melanoma skin cancer, as the disease in the majority of cases is not life-threatening or serious enough to cause long term illness; or
 - melanoma, as research indicates that current diagnostic practices for melanoma are not optimal in terms of accuracy or cost-effectiveness and there is insufficient evidence that screening the general population offers reduced morbidity and mortality.
- Recommends that general practitioners:
 - develop surveillance programs for patients at high risk;
 - assess patients who are concerned and develop appropriate management programs depending on their level of risk; and
 - who identify risk factors for skin cancer in patients presenting for other reasons to educate patients about sun protection measures and offer them an opportunity for a full body examination and an appropriate management plan (i.e. case finding with follow-up).

The Standing Committee on Screening endorses the recommendations and key messages provided in Cancer Council Australia's position statement.

This statement was updated by the Standing Committee on Screening in August 2017. It replaces the *2008 Screening and Early Detection of Skin Cancer Statement*.