

Skin Cancer Prevention Research Summary

Early Detection of Skin Cancer in Men 50-64

Background

HPA has undertaken research to examine the most effective way to support the early detection of skin cancer. New Zealanders 50+ years¹ are most at risk of skin cancer, and men are twice as likely to die from melanoma as women. The aim of this research was to provide an insight into typical attitudes to early detection alongside general behaviours and attitudes toward overall health in working men aged 50 to 64 years of age.

Exploring NZ men 50+ attitudes/behaviours to early detection

- HPA contracted Research First to carry out qualitative research using focus groups nationwide.
- Seven focus groups of men aged 50 to 64-years-old were held from 27 June to 2 July 2018.
- All groups were professionally facilitated by Research First.
- The groups were recruited from rural Bay of Plenty and two urban groups in Christchurch and Auckland with a mix of Māori, European and Pasifika men.
- Rural participants worked outdoors (or spent most of their day outdoors).
- Urban participants worked indoors but spent leisure time outdoors.

Summary of typical attitudes

Skin cancer as a priority

- Skin cancer is a low priority for NZ males aged 50 to 64 years.
- Perceived risk of dying from skin cancer is much lower than perceived risk of dying from other types of cancers and cardiovascular diseases (eg, lung cancer and heart attack).
- There is only so much room in the 'thinking cup' of concerns after family, mortgage, career, and other health issues. Skin cancer does not feature as a current priority.
- Cost of skin checks (including mole mapping) was identified as another barrier to prioritising early detection behaviours for skin cancer.

¹ **Standards of Service Provision for Melanoma Patients in New Zealand- Provisional** pg 9, 1.2
'those aged 50 and over, are advised to 'regularly examine their skin (including skin not normally exposed to the sun) so that they can be aware of any changes'

Their view of themselves and their world

- These men are prepared to sacrifice their own health in order to prioritise their kids/family.
- This group see themselves as fit, active and healthy (or at least aspire to be).

Understanding risk factors

- They believe they're already reasonably 'SunSmart' now.
- Participants didn't realise that historical behaviour (sunburn) increases current risk.
- Many of the Māori and Pacific men never check their skin or think they are at risk.

Suggested way forward

- The audience group identified workplaces and/or sports clubs as being well placed to promote skin checks to men aged 50+ and an opportunity to reduce cost barriers to getting checked by their GP.
- Key influencers of this group are wives/partners and daughters *"my daughter... that's why I'm here. She's always on my back!"*
- Any imagery used in a campaign needs to reflect their view of themselves (ie, young in outlook and active).

About the HPA

The HPA is a Crown entity that leads and delivers innovative, high quality and cost-effective programmes and activities that promote health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and prevent disease, illness and injury. HPA also enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm.

