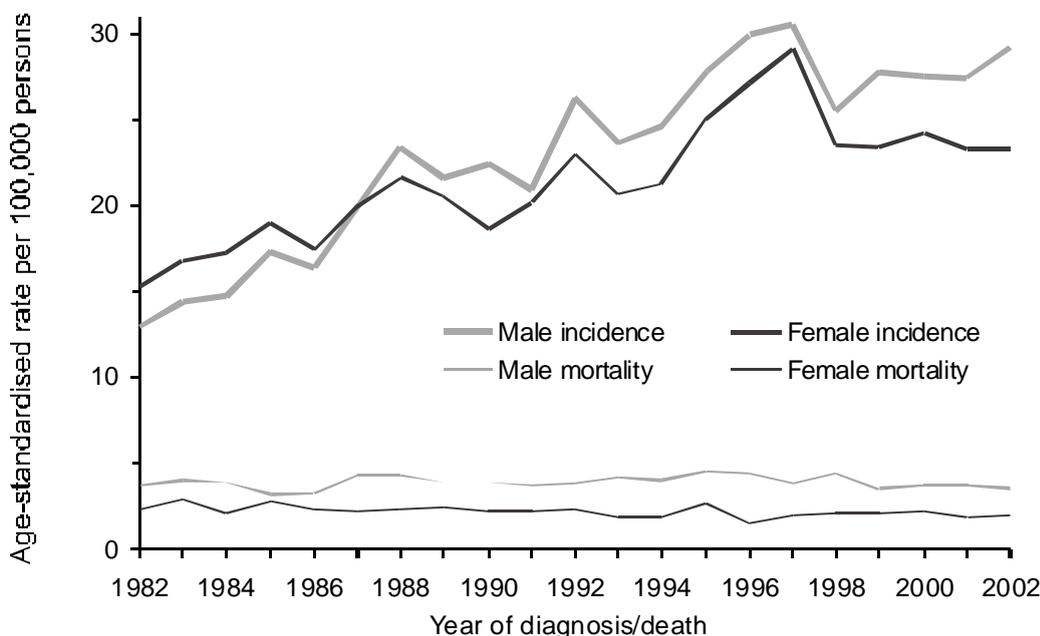


## Background Information

### Melanoma

- Melanoma is the most deadly of the skin cancers; treatment of melanoma is generally surgery, where the cancer and its surrounding skin is removed.
- The Cancer Council's registry for 2002 shows, 1 807 Victorians were diagnosed with Melanoma.
- This rise can be attributed to:
  - Significant lag time between exposure and diagnosis – many of these people did not receive the SunSmart message early enough to reduce their risk. (96% of those diagnosed were over 25years)
  - Skin cancers are being detected earlier due to community knowledge of early detection messages.
- Melanoma is the fifth leading site of cancer diagnosis in Victorians behind Bowel, Breast, Prostate and Lung cancer.
- 215 Victorians died in 2002 from melanoma.

### Melanoma incidence and mortality trends, Victoria 1982-2002



Source: The Cancer Council Victoria Epidemiology Centre, March 2004

### Financial cost of skin cancer

- Skin cancer is the largest financial burden of all cancers on our health system costing over \$420 million each year.

## Non-melanoma

- In 2002 - 374 000 Australians were diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer.
- More than 1 in every 2 Australians being diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.
- In Victorian 48 850 people were diagnosed with non melanoma skin cancers in 2002

## National incidence and mortality rates 2002

- 8 531 Australians were diagnosed with melanoma
- 374 000 Australians were diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer
- 1 300 Australians died from skin cancer (971 melanoma and 359 non-melanoma)

## Tanning Attitudes

- Victoria has been tracking tanning attitudes and behaviours since 1990 and last year for the first time in a decade we saw a significant increase in Victorian's desire for a tan.
- Research conducted by The Cancer Council Victoria indicates:
  - 24% of Victorians are trying to get a deliberate tan
  - more than 60% of Victorians aged 14-19 would like to have a tan, compared with 29% aged over 55 years
- Tanning Information
  - tanning is a sign of skin damage – it's the skin's process of protecting itself from further damage
  - when the top layer of skin is exposed to ultraviolet radiation, production of a pigment called melanin is stimulated, causing the skin to darken
  - tanning without burning can cause DNA and skin damage leading to premature ageing, and could cause skin cancer
  - a natural tan offers very limited sunburn protection – usually an average of an SPF4, depending on the skin type
  - the melanin produced by fair-skinned people is much less protective, meaning no amount of sunbaking will result in a tan – just sunburn and skin damage
- Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers this summer Victorians should use shade where possible, wear a hat that covers their face, neck and ears, protective clothing, and apply plenty of sunscreen 20 minutes before going out in the sun and reapply every 2 hours.

For further information  
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